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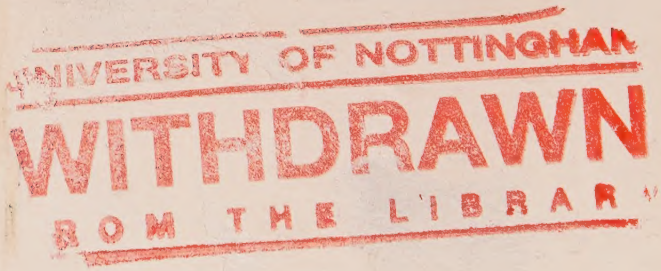

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MEDIAEVAL CHESHIRE

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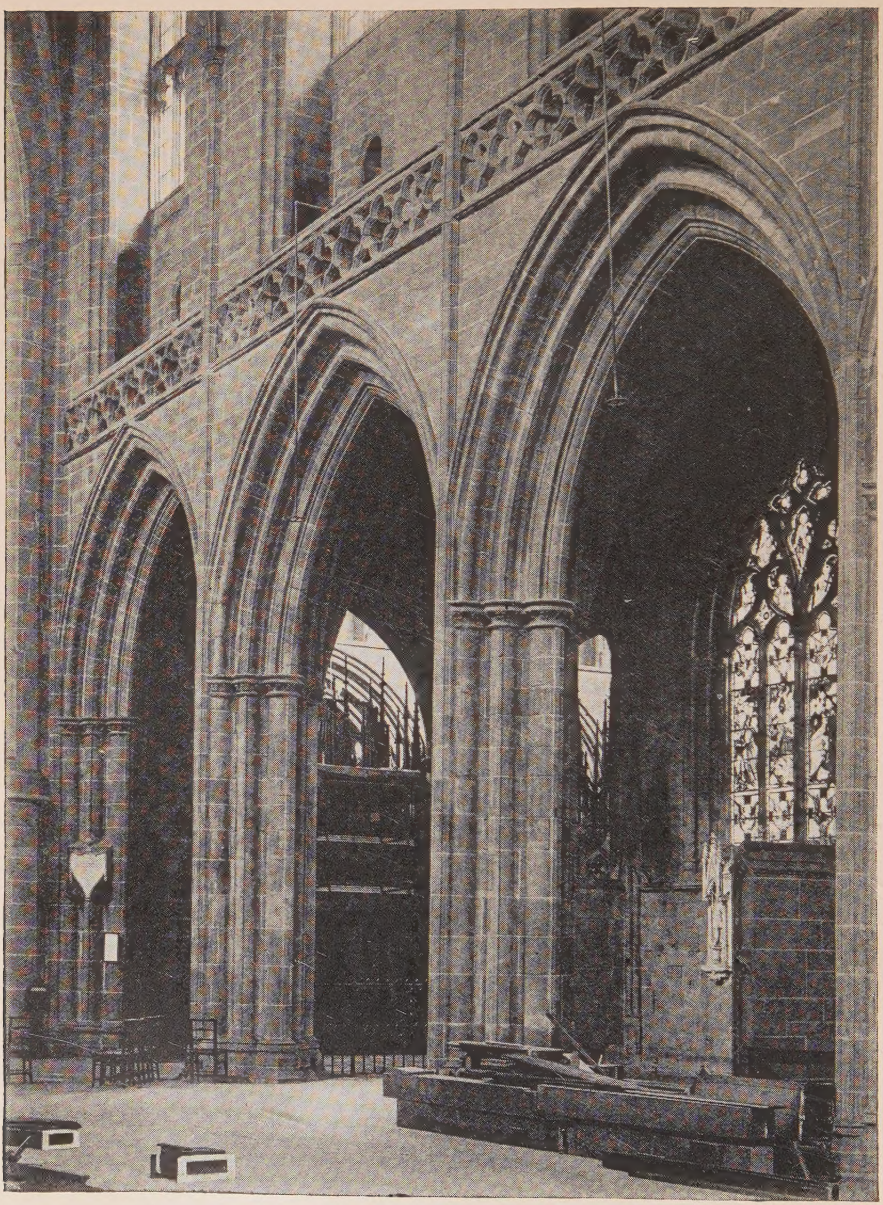

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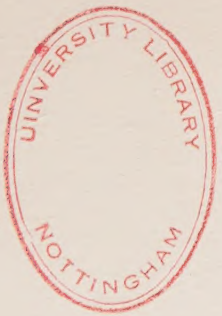
CHESTER CATHEDRAL, SOUTH TRANSEPT, EAST ARCADE

MEDIAEVAL CHESHIRE

AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF CHESHIRE IN THE REIGNS OF THE THREE EDWARDS

BY

H. J. HEWITT, M.A., PH.D.



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PREFACE

I.

OVER a century has passed since the publication of Ormerod's large *History of Cheshire*. A second edition, edited by Helsby, appeared in 1882, and Earwaker's *East Cheshire* appeared in 1877-80. Since 1882 no considerable history of Cheshire has been published. These works though massive, are limited in scope and arranged on principles which make the attainment of a general view of the county at any given date impossible. Ormerod's method is described by Helsby. It consisted in "confining his accounts to the manorial estates, and for variety and colour, giving such additional particulars of some of the lesser estates and families as the circumstances of the case warranted. In addition to this, he introduced short biographical notices of the most distinguished and prominent characters of the county. . . ." Earwaker describes his own methods. He will eschew "ponderous folios with pages of Latin documents and full of unproved pedigrees and unauthenticated statements. . . . In each parish . . . the general system followed has been the same. After recording the first mention of the name of the parish, a history of each manor and of its possessors is given, together with a full pedigree. . . . This is followed by a notice of the minor gentry . . . (and) a history of the Church. . . ." In short both writers arranged their matter according to locality and not according to subject.

Of Chester itself, several histories have been written, the largest, fullest and most recent being Canon R. H. Morris' *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*. In this volume Canon Morris printed scores of documents relative to the history of Chester. About half the book is devoted to documents the greater number of which is entirely unedited. It might in fact be considered a source book, and I have used it freely as such. His text treats the internal and municipal history of the city fairly fully but it has two serious defects :—(1) It treats Chester as an isolated unit, having no relation whatever to the surrounding

country. (2) It is a compilation rather than a history: there is scarcely any attempt to trace cause and effect, or to make a reasoned account of the city's growth. The author did not call it a history, but described it as "an attempt . . . to put in a convenient form gleanings from the Collection of Historical Documents relating to the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods which are preserved in the Muniment Room of the Corporation of the City of Chester."

There was need, therefore, for a reasoned study of mediæval Cheshire. So far as I know, only one effort has been made in this direction. This is a short work, *Chester, Birkenhead and Liverpool in the Patent and Close Rolls of the three Edwards*, by Mr. J. H. Lumby. So far as it goes, this is a sound and readable study. Its limitations, however, are obvious. It is short—merely thirty-six pages; it is avowedly based on two sources only, and at the time it was written, several volumes of the Calendar of Patent Rolls and the Calendar of Close Rolls had not been published; it deals with political and military as well as economic affairs.

There is room, therefore, for a further work, fuller and built on a broader base, dealing with the whole county, yet confined to the economic and social aspects of its history.

II.

(1) Some few of the principal features of the economic and social history of Cheshire have long been known to historians. That the county was sparsely populated, that the people were reputed turbulent but admitted to be good soldiers, that extensive forests existed, that marl was worked, that the Dee mills were lucrative, and that the port of Chester was in touch with Ireland and Gascony, these things are almost commonplaces of history.

But they have never been investigated in detail for the period under consideration. The evil repute of the Cheshire men, for example, rested chiefly on the assertions of the chroniclers of the reign of Richard II. The nature, degree, causes and results of their violence have not been examined.

Or again, the antiquity of the use of marl rested on the observations of Tudor writers (Leland and Fitzherbert). Ormerod had ventured so far as to assert that marl is "mentioned as early as the commencement of the fourteenth century," but he gave no reference (*Hist. Ches.* I, Introd. I, xxi). The subject needed investigation and it has been possible to show that marl was used more

extensively and at a much earlier date than Ormerod appears to have surmised.

Further, the Cheshire salt industry has lain in obscurity. The detailed information of Domesday was known, but Hall (*History of Nantwich*) merely mentions the owners of a few saltpits and adds " few particulars relating to the manufacture of salt in Nantwich are known from the year 1245 . . . to the Tudor period." Of Northwich and Middlewich, Ormerod similarly has little to say beyond the names of owners of saltpits. The size and value of the wich houses, the mediæval customs of the salt industry, the distribution of salt and the value of the Wiches needed investigation.

As a final example, the port of Chester itself has never received systematic treatment (for the period under consideration). Morris does not mention a single import or export during the period 1272-1377. To the corn trade (before 1272) he gives three lines, and to the wine trade " from the reign of Henry IV " onwards, he gives two lines, while the lesser ports in the estuary are not even mentioned.

Here then was ground for inquiry.

(2) But the present work goes further than filling in an existing outline. In so far as sources are available, I have endeavoured to throw light on several phases of the county's history which hitherto have received no treatment. The long, slow process by which ecclesiastic, lay lord and peasant made inroads on the forests, drained the marshes and widened the bounds of cultivation, is described ; the mills of the county are considered and the Dee mills are treated at some length ; cattle, pigs, sheep and the wool trade are discussed ; the important Macclesfield stud (which strangely enough has escaped the notice of all writers) is treated in detail ; the earl's organisation for the maintenance of his castles and manors is analysed and illustrated ; the general building operations of the period are reviewed and the building of one great abbey is treated in detail ; the effects of the Welsh wars on Cheshire and Chester are considered and the new economic relationship between the palatine county and North Wales is illustrated ; the density, composition and character of the population are discussed ; the roads, traffic and cost of transport in the county are considered.

In short, an attempt has been made to sketch broadly the general economic and social condition of Cheshire during a century of its history.

III.

Dealing with a very wide range of material, I have been conscious of the need of some principle of proportion. Cheshire differed from other counties in some respects ; it resembled them in many more. Necessarily, therefore, this work must deal with many aspects of mediæval life which are well known. Quarrying and building, harvesting and cattle-rearing, markets and monasteries, these are common enough topics, but they are not less important because they are common. Whoever proposes to write the history of a county must give them their due proportion of space.

On the other hand, some conditions were peculiar to Cheshire or characteristic of Cheshire rather than of other counties. To these, I trust sufficient prominence has been given. The influence of North Wales upon Cheshire, the salt industry in the Wiches, the turbulence of the people and their war service, the extensive use of marl—these and similar topics are treated at what I conceive to be reasonable length. In many places where circumstances in Cheshire can conveniently be compared with circumstances elsewhere, I have indicated (either in the text or in a footnote) material for comparison.

My thanks are due to the late H. Hodson, Esq., Diocesan Registrar of Lichfield, for permission to copy and photograph sections of the episcopal registers ; to G. K. Willet, Esq., for very courteously granting me access to the Duke of Westminster's MSS. at Eaton Hall, Chester ; to J. H. Dickson, Esq., Town Clerk of Chester, and Dr. H. Guppy of the Rylands Library, Manchester, for permission to copy MSS. in their charge ; to Dr. H. W. Meikle, formerly University Adviser to External Research students in History in the University of London, and Professor Hamilton Thompson of the Leeds University for advice in the preparation of the work ; to Professor Bryner Jones of Aberystwyth for information respecting mediæval Welsh cattle ; to Basil Pendleton, Esq., for the block of Vale Royal Abbey, and to F. H. Crossley, Esq., F.S.A., for three prints. I am grateful also to Miss K. G. L. Baker, B.A., who has read the proofs and helped to make the indexes. Professor Tait, whose knowledge of the history of Cheshire is unsurpassed, has very kindly advised me in several matters of detail and given invaluable help in the preparation of the maps.

H. J. HEWITT

SALTASH, *March, 1929*

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SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

A. UNPUBLISHED

1. *At the Public Record Office.*

MINISTERS' ACCOUNTS.—Relevant accounts are of two origins—(*a*) the earldom of Chester (General Series). These are numerous and diverse. They include the Chamberlains' accounts; the accounts of the bailiffs or reeves of the manors of Frodsham, Northwich, Middlewich, Macclesfield, Shotwick and Drakelow, and of the keeper of the Macclesfield stock; the accounts of the foresters of Delamere and of Wirral; the accounts of the sheriffs and the escheators.

They are of the highest value and afford detailed information of many kinds. The Frodsham and Macclesfield Accounts contain copious details about the stocks. The Northwich and Middlewich Accounts give particulars of the customs of the salt industry.

(*b*) The earldom (and later the duchy) of Lancaster (Duchy of Lancaster Series). These cover the Cheshire estates of the Earls of Lancaster: Halton, Runcorn, Moore, Whitley, Cogshall, Congleton, Dunham, Bidston, Kelsall.

They are briefer than the accounts mentioned under (*a*), and throw little or no light on sheep and cattle rearing, but give a good deal of information about other aspects of the manors.

RENTALS AND SURVEYS for the period under consideration are few and No. 897 (Longdendale) is largely illegible. No. 804 (Drakelowe) is clear and very detailed. No. 6/33 (Shotwick) though less detailed is valuable. No. 893 (temp. Elizabeth) contains a rental of possessions which had belonged to the abbey of St. Werburgh before the dissolution.

FOREST ROLLS are of great value for the light they throw on the reclamation of land, the digging of marl-pits, the felling of timber and the lawing of dogs, while a little information is also given concerning poaching. There are, however, large gaps in the series, and the rolls are mainly confined to the forests of Wirral and Delamere (but similar information respecting the forest of Macclesfield is found in some of the Assize Rolls).

ANCIENT PETITIONS.—The relevant Ancient Petitions have been examined and the following have been used:—

Nos. 7226, 7247 point to difficulties in completing the building of Vale Royal Abbey.

No. 7364 urges the disafforestation of Wirral.

Enrolments.—These rolls have been calendared (*Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXXVI, Appendix II), but some of the entries in the calendar are so brief that it is necessary to see the original rolls. Chester 2/36 m. 6d., for example, contains a full statement of the customs taken at Northwich in 1352 for the repair of the bridge.

Judicial Records.—Assize Rolls, Eyre Rolls, Plea Rolls. The Plea Rolls are full and practically continuous. The Assize Rolls and Eyre Rolls, though not continuous are of more value (for the purpose of this study). They throw light on the turbulence and violence of the period, and the following contain information about the administration of the Statute of Labourers :—

Eyre Roll, Chester, 17/13, mm. 1, 4, 10, 11, 15. Indictment Roll, Chester, 25/19, mm. 3, 33b, 42b, 93, 165; while Assize Roll, Chester, 17/12, contains pleas of the forest of Macclesfield and supplements the information derived from the Forest Rolls.

T.R. Book 279 (The Register of the Black Prince).—It has recently been calendared, but is not yet printed. This contains instructions to the justice and chamberlain respecting the administration of the earldom, petitions, inquisitions, and other documents. The material is detailed, covers many aspects of administration and is particularly useful for the light it throws on estate management and on the circumstances which led to the rising of 1353.

2. *At the British Museum.*

1. Additional Charters.—No. 37261 contains an account of the horses in the Macclesfield stud farm in 1329.

Nos. 37265, 37241, 37243, 37287 and 37051 refer to the bailiffs or keepers of the manor of Macclesfield.

No. 27408 is a rent roll of property in South Cheshire in 1347.

2. Harleian MSS.—Several volumes contain matter relative to mediæval Cheshire, but the volumes consist of transcripts ; in many instances, the origin is not indicated, and the bulk of the material relates to events of a later date than this study. The following may be mentioned :—

Harl. 2083 (Chester Mills) ; Harl. 2149 (Forests and suits about villeins) ; Harl. 2115 (Forests, extents of Tarvin).

3. Eaton MSS., at Eaton Hall, Chester.—There are 237 documents relating to the reigns of the three Edwards. They are chiefly grants, leases and exchanges of property in Northwich, Middlewich, Tushingham, Cuddington, Pulford, Kinnerton and other places in Cheshire, and are of little interest save that they reveal (*a*) the existence of many Welshmen in the Dee valley ; (*b*) a few particulars concerning the location of saltpits in Middlewich.

There are, however, two rolls of first-rate importance :—

(i) Eaton MS., Edward III/101 and Edward III/102. This is a very full reeve's account of the manor of Eaton by Tarporley for the year 46-47 Edward III.

(ii) Eaton MS., Edward III/110. This is a roll of Ministers' Accounts

of the earldom of Chester, for the year 27-28 Edward III, and includes accounts of the bailiff of Northwich, Cachepolls of Middlewich, Foresters of Delamere and of Wirral, and Keeper of the Dee mills.

The first four are valuable as supplementing the Ministers' Accounts at the P.R.O. The last is of the highest importance for it gives very full details of a year's working of the Dee mills.

4. Chester MSS., at the Town Hall, Chester.—Described briefly in *Eighth Report of Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Appendix, 355. It is unfortunate that only a very small part of this large store of MSS. could be utilised. The Customs Entry Books begin in 1451-2. The Mayors' Books begin in 1393. The only MSS. available for this work are

(*a*) Pentice Court Rolls beginning in 1282.

(*b*) Portmoot and Crownmoot Rolls beginning in 1290.

Both (*a*) and (*b*) are full of the usual offences (violence, theft, etc.), but they add little to the knowledge derivable from the Plea Rolls.

(*c*) " Statute Merchants, 1342-42 " (Catalogue B12). This list contains the names of merchants who made recognizance before the Mayor of Chester and in some cases states the nature of the goods they have bought.

5. Jodrell MSS. Tatton Papers (MSS.). Mainwaring MSS. At the John Rylands Library, Manchester.—These are mostly grants and of no value for the purpose of this work, but a few (Mainwaring MSS. 110, 117, 140, 142, 143, 158) refer to Nantwich in the 14th century, and Nos. 140 and 143 mention particular wych houses. Tatton MS. 6 is a grant by Abbot Simon of Whitchurch (of Chester Abbey). No. 27 includes a grant of a salthouse.

6. Lichfield Episcopal Registers, at the Diocesan Registry, Lichfield.—The institutions to benefices in Cheshire, and licences to study throw light on the clergy, but the registers have been chiefly useful for a copy of a long letter from Bishop Norbury to the Abbot and Convent of Chester following a visitation in 1323. The letter occurs twice in Volume III at folios 36a and 98. My transcript and photograph are from 98-100a.

II. ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

B. PUBLISHED

After the very valuable information of Domesday (*The Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, ed. J. Tait, 1916), with its account of Chester and of the customs of the salt industry, the topographical aspect may be followed in the work of two writers actually resident at Chester. The *Liber Luciani de laude Cestrie* (ed. M. V. Taylor ; Record Society, LXIV, 1912) contains among much irrelevant moralising a vivid picture of Chester at about the beginning of the thirteenth century, while *Higden's Polychronicon* (ed. C. Babington and J. R. Lumby, Rolls Series, 1865-86), though largely a compilation from earlier writers, contains a good deal of new matter about

Chester and the Welsh. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae* (ed. J. F. Dimock, Rolls Series, London, 1868) has a few notes on the Dee and an analysis of the problems of conquering and governing Wales, a century before our period ; and Leland, *Itinerary of England*, 1535-1543 (ed. L. T. Smith, 5 vols., London, 1907-1910) gives a clear account of Cheshire, especially the Wiches, a century and a half after our period.

Concerning the monastic estates, in addition to Dugdale : *Monasticon Anglicanum* (6 vols., London, 1846), there is the *Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey* (ed. W. A. Hulton, C.S., O.S., X, XI, XVI, XX) for the Stanlaw property, and the *Chartulary of Dieulacres* (Wm. Salt. Hist. Collection for Staffordshire, NS., IX, 1906). A number of leases and rentals—mostly, however, of the fifteenth century—in *The Book of the Abbot of Combermere* (ed. J. Hall ; Lancs. and Chesh. Record Society, XXXI, 1896) illustrate the development of the Nantwich property of the Abbot and Convent of Combermere. *The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey*, printed from a seventeenth-century transcript, contains a valuable account of the struggles of the villeins on the Abbey estates, a detailed rental, and in an appendix drawn from Exchequer K.R. Enrolled Accounts, the invaluable building accounts of the Abbey. Finally the *Chartulary of Chester Abbey* (ed. J. Tait, 2 vols., C.S., N.S., LXXIX, LXXXII, 1920, 1922), though much less varied in character, throws light on the growth, consolidation and development of the estates of St. Werburgh's Abbey and has a valuable introduction. In *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (Record Commission, London, 1802) and *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (Record Commission, London, 1810-34), Vol. V, the temporalities of the monasteries are summarised.

Far less material has been published concerning the estates of the laity. *An Early Rental of Sir Peter de Thornton*, taken from the Earl of Sefton's MSS. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, 1896, Chester) gives details of holdings in Delamere forest.

The *Calendar of Arley Charters* (ed. W. Beamont, London, 1866) throws a little light on the Dutton and Warburton estates. The *De Lacy Compoti* (ed. P. A. Lyons, C.S., O.S., CXII, 1884) give detailed accounts of the Cheshire manors belonging to the Earldom of Lancaster ; and *John of Gaunt's Register* (ed. S. Armitage Smith, Camden Society, 2 vols., 1911) throws light on the management of the Lancaster estates.

In *The Peasants' Rising and the Lollards* (*Documents*) (Powell & Trevelyan, London, 1899) is a full transcript from the Chester Indictment Roll dealing with the isolated outbreak in the Wirral in 1381.

On the more active life of the county, a flood of light is thrown by the *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts*, 1301-1360. In addition to twenty Chamberlains' Accounts and one Receiver's Account, the volume contains six bailiffs' accounts, four foresters' accounts, two sheriffs' accounts and two escheators' accounts. The accounts as a whole are full of valuable matter of a very varied character covering not only the changing values of the Earl's various sources of income, but also much detailed information concerning escapes of beasts, the repair of castles and manors, fines for assarting without licence, customs of the wiches, the carriage of money to the wardrobe, etc., etc. The *Flintshire Ministers' Accounts*, 1301-1328 (ed. A. Jones, Flintshire Historical Society, III, 1913) throws a similar light on the county of Flint and contains useful information about the develop-

ment of the mines. *Archæologia*, XVI (London, 1812) contains a "copy of the roll of the expenses of King Edward I at Rhuddlan, 1281-1282," which gives much information about wages, prices and cost of transport.

In the (calendared) Welsh Records, the following are useful: *Calendar of Deeds, Inquisitions and Writs of Dower enrolled on the Plea Rolls of the County of Chester*, published as appendices to the 26th, 27th and 28th Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, and the *Calendar of Recognizance Rolls of the Palatinate of Chester*, 36th Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, Appendix II. The latter volume covers important ground, containing not merely the enrolments of recognizances, but appointments, commissions, letters patent and other documents. Its utility is, however, impaired by the fact that the entries are calendared under the names of persons and places. The entries moreover are, in most instances, brief (*vide supra* "Enrolments").

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The chronicles and annals which might have been most valuable end early in our period. *Annales Cestrienses* (ed. R. C. Christie) (printed from a transcript) follows local, especially Welsh, events in some detail down to 1297. *Brut y Tywysogion* (ed. J. W. ap Ithel, Rolls Series, 1860) ends in 1282, and *Annales Cambriæ* (ed. J. W. ap Ithel, Rolls Series, 1860) in 1288.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

Ann. Cest.	= *Annales Cestrienses.* Ed. R. C. Christie (Record Society, Vol. 14, 1886).
Beamont: *Halton and Norton.*	= Beamont: *History of the Castle of Halton and Priory of Norton.*
C. Chart. R.	= *Calendar of Charter Rolls.*
C.Cl.R.	= *Calendar of Close Rolls.*
C.F.R.	= *Calendar of Fine Rolls.*
Cal. Inq. Misc.	= *Calendar of Inquisitions—Miscellaneous.*
C.P.R.	= *Calendar of Patent Rolls.*
Chamber Accts.	= *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts,* 1301-1360, ed. R. Stewart-Brown (Record Society, Vol. 59, 1910).
Chester Chartulary.	= *Chartulary of Chester Abbey.* Ed. J. Tait (Chetham Society, 2 vols., 79 and 82).
C.S.	= Chetham Society.
County Ct. Rolls.	= *Chester County Court Rolls.* Ed. R. Stewart-Brown (Chetham Society, N.S., Vol. 84).
Cunningham: *English History.*	= Cunningham: *Growth of English History and Commerce.*
Domesday Survey of Cheshire.	= *Domesday Survey of Cheshire.* Ed. J. Tait. (C.S., N.S., Vol. LXXV.)
E.H.R.	= *English Historical Review.*
Flint Ministers' Accts.	= *Flintshire Ministers' Accounts.*
Leland: *Itinerary.*	= Leland: *Itinerary of England,* 1535-1543.
Liber Luciani.	= *Liber Luciani de Laude Cestrie.* Ed. M. V. Taylor (Record Society, vol. 64, 1912).
Morris (*Welsh Wars*).	= Morris, J. E.: *The Welsh Wars of King Edward the First.* Oxford, 1901.
Morris (*Chester*).	Morris, R. H.: *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns.* Chester, N.D.
Morris (Doc.).[1]	= The documents printed in Morris, R. H., *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns.*

[1] It has been desirable to distinguish between Canon Morris' work as a historian and his work as transcriber of documents—see Preface, pp. v-vi.

Recog. Rolls.	= *Calendar of Recognizance Rolls of the Palatinate of Chester* (Welsh Records), Deputy Keeper's Reports, XXXVI, Appendix II.
Rogers : *Hist. Agriculture.*	= Rogers : *History of Agriculture and Prices.*
Rogers : *Six Centuries.*	= Rogers : *Six Centuries of Work and Wages.*
Tout : *Chapters.*	= Tout : *Chapters in Mediæval Administrative History.*
Tout : *Edward II.*	= Tout : *Place of Reign of Edward II.*
Unwin : *Finance and Trade.*	= Unwin (ed.). *Finance and Trade Under Edward III.*
V.R.L. Book.	= *The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey.* Ed. J. Brownbill (Record Society, Vol. 68, 1914).
V.C.H.	= *Victoria County History.*

CHESHIRE IN 1300

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE economic condition of a locality is usually governed in a large measure by geographical factors. Access to the sea, proximity to a large market or to an important highway, the shelter of a mountain range, the existence of hostile neighbours—circumstances such as these frequently exercise as great an influence on the development of a locality as its natural resources or the character of its people. Such circumstances may help or hinder development. Often they direct it along certain channels, aiding it here and thwarting it there.

In its well-watered plains, its many fisheries, its extensive forests and its salt deposits, mediæval Cheshire had natural resources which, in combination with the character of its people, determined in a large measure its economic development. But no study either of the general economic history of the county or of its condition at any given period can omit the dominant geographical factors.

By reason of its position and the configuration of its surface, Cheshire affords a highway from the middle of England in three directions, namely: to the north, to Ireland and to North Wales. The Pennine Upland lying to the east of Cheshire compels traffic from the west and south of England to approach the coast of Lancashire as the easiest route to the north, and throws across Cheshire a north-to-south line of communication. This route to Preston, Lancaster, Carlisle and Scotland was relatively unimportant in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Lancashire was a poor unpopulous county. An easy and equally direct route to Scotland lay along the east coast. The broad estuary of the Mersey and the marshy tract along its valley hindered general communications, formed an insuperable barrier to military advance and caused a deflection of the Watling Street from Chester in the direction of Manchester. The Mersey was, however, crossed even in Roman times by a ford near Stretton, and in the Middle Ages by a bridge at Warrington. The highway which thus crossed the Mersey and passed southwards through Cheshire, formed the connecting link between Lancashire and the more populous parts of England.

Far more important in the Middle Ages were the other two highways. The English lowlands stretch through Cheshire to the shores

of the Irish Sea and Cheshire became at an early date the principal avenue of communication between England and Ireland. It is true that Great Britain approaches the coast of Ireland more closely in Kintyre, but the relative effect of different parts of the barrier of the narrow seas depends more on the character of the shores than on the width of the Channel. Whereas the North Channel lay between highland districts which were comparatively poor and unimportant, the Chester-Dublin passage connected the English and Irish lowlands directly. It is true also that the early Anglo-Norman invasions of Ireland passed along the coast of South Wales and Pembroke. Political circumstances had rendered it more convenient for an earl of Pembroke than an earl of Chester to employ his forces across the seas. But even at that date, the route from Chester to Dublin was in many respects the more important,[1] and many other expeditions to Ireland down to the reign of Elizabeth proceeded by way of Cheshire.

Finally, the Cheshire plain (with the bridge at Chester) affords the most practicable route into North Wales and was, therefore, the highway for the numerous military expeditions against the Welsh.

This quality of nodality (which is permanent) [2] was not, however, the dominant geographical factor in the Norman and Plantagenet periods. More important was proximity to Wales, for the March of Wales was a region of intermittent warfare.

The Conqueror's policy in regard to the frontier of Wales had been to erect a number of strong earldoms, the military power of which would check the invasions of the Welsh. Foremost among these bulwarks of the Norman power was the earldom of Chester, at first held by Gherbod, but soon handed to Hugh Lupus to hold " as freely by his sword as the king held England by his crown." Cheshire became a palatine earldom, and the sole justification for the enormous powers vested in its earl lay in the need for constant warfare, offensive or defensive, against the Welsh. At one time the scene of hostilities was far away from the Dee. At another, the wave of the Welsh advance swept almost to the walls of Chester, and the work of conquest had to be recommenced. The reign of a weak earl or the absence of a strong one gave the Welsh an opportunity for aggression which they were not slow to seize. In 1146, for example, when Earl Randle was made a prisoner at Northampton, the Welsh " laid waste the county of Chester " and penetrated as

[1] Henry II had an army waiting at Chester in 1164, and apparently would have transported it to Ireland, but the number of ships available was insufficient. *Brut Y Tywysogion*, 203.

[2] (*a*) In respect of railways, the great junction at Crewe and the auxiliary junction at Chester are the modern indication of nodality.

(*b*) In respect of roads : " Cheshire has considerable through traffic north and south as well as east and west. . . . Its roads have to bear an unusual proportion of traffic originating outside the county " (Lord Montague of Beaulieu in *The Times*, 9th July, 1921).

far as Nantwich [1] before they were defeated. Plundering raids occurred frequently. "The Welsh devastated the region round Chester," says Higden, and again, "The Welsh, hating the yoke of slavery, used to plunder the counties of Chester, Salop and Hereford." [2]

Warfare was prolonged over long periods. As late as 1264, a Chester chronicler writes of the partial cessation of a "war which had continued between Cheshire and Wales for eight years and nine months." [3] The Celtic temperament was well fitted for the work of harassing the borderland, and by the time of Edward I a blow which should end this border warfare with its inevitable economic loss had become urgently needed.

Nor is it solely the loss sustained in border raids and border warfare that affected the economic condition of the county palatine. The essential feature of the march was that its lord held the frontier by the resources of the province itself. Only in extremity did he call on his overlord for assistance. The conquest of Wales was mainly the work of the lords of the Welsh marches, though it was completed by national forces under Edward I. In spite of occasional reverses even in the county palatine itself, in spite of several disasters in North Wales, the Anglo-Norman power was steadily extended further and further into Wales. And the work was accomplished very largely by the men, and with the resources, of Cheshire.

The great military importance of the palatine earldom and its strongly fortified capital was, of course, understood by the king.[4] In 1237, when the line of the earls of Chester became extinct, the great fief escheated to the king,[5] and Henry III retained it in his own hands. In 1253 he bestowed it upon his son Edward,[6] and from that date the earldom of Chester remained in royal hands.

Nor was an appreciation of its importance confined to the king and his military advisers. Lucian considered that the harbours of Cheshire held the keys of Ireland.[7] Higden spoke of Chester as "a town in the borderland of England looking to Wales." [8] The citizens of Chester stated that their city "stands on and adjoins the march of Wales," [9]

[1] Apud Wichum: *Annales Cestrienses*, 20. The editor (R. C. Christie) translated the words "at Nantwich." Ormerod (*Cheshire*, III, 427-428) quotes a leaf inserted in "Harl." MS. 2155, where the words are "apud Wycum Malbanum" which would justify Christie's assumption that the Wich referred to was Nantwich. Professor Lloyd, however, contends that Nantwich is too far east, and holds that the spot was one of the smaller wiches near the Dee. *History of Wales*, II, 491.

[2] Higden, *Polychronicon*, VII, 360, and VIII, 4. [3] *Ann. Cest.*, 90.

[4] Higden, *Polychronicon*, VIII, 210: Verum quia terra sua regali gaudebat prerogativa, comitatus ejus ad manus regias devenit datis aliis terris heredibus suis sororibus in compensationem ne tam praeclara dominatio inter colos feminarum dividi contingeret. [5] *Ann. Cest.*, 60. See *E.H.R.*, XXXVI, 36 *et seq.*

[6] *Ibid.*, 68. [7] *Liber Luciani*, 45.

[8] *Polychronicon*, II, 76-78. [9] Morris (*Doc.*), 513.

and again that it was built " for the keeping and safeguarding of the marches of Wales." [1]

Two broad principles emerge. In the first place, although certain important natural highways cross Cheshire, the benefits accruing from this advantageous position were counterbalanced by the fact that Cheshire lay in the march of Wales. In short, the dominant geographical influence at the beginning of the period under consideration was proximity to Wales. Secondly (and consequently) the economic development of the county had necessarily been subordinated to military requirements. It was not merely that the county had suffered, during several centuries, at the hands of Welsh marauders. Necessity had compelled the expenditure of its resources in warfare offensive as well as defensive.

The greater part of Cheshire is a low plain. Only in the east where the Pennines form the boundary, does the surface rise to a thousand feet above sea-level. The remainder lies at an altitude of less than 600 feet, except for small areas of the strip of higher land, which runs from Frodsham southwards towards Malpas, marking the outcrop of Keuper sandstone. It is usually termed a plain, and though it is far from presenting a perfectly level surface, gradients are in most places insufficient to impede ordinary vehicular traffic.

The soil overlying the triassic formation has, in modern times, been considered among the most fertile in England, and though the conditions which render this modern fertility so profitable are too remote from mediæval conditions to make a comparison valuable, it may be conceded that the soil in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was potentially fertile.

The county is, moreover, well watered. The Mersey and the Dee lie on its boundaries ; the Weaver, with its tributary the Dane, flows through the very heart of the county, and the sluggish Gowy flows northward into the Mersey. Further, the surface is dotted with a large number of meres, several of which are a mile in length, while ponds and " pits " [2] are very numerous. It is true that one or two of these meres have been made artificially in comparatively modern times, but by far the larger number of them existed in the Middle Ages, and some of the mediæval meres have been drained. It is true also that many " pits " are of comparatively modern origin, but marl pits were common in mediæval Cheshire.[3]

When a moderate rainfall and mild temperature are added to this well-watered and fertile plain, several of the most important conditions of prosperity have been fulfilled. That economic development pro-

[1] Morris (*Doc.*), 523.
[2] On the use of the word " pit " in Cheshire *vide infra*, 21, *n.* 2.
[3] Their importance here is that they rapidly fill with water, *vide infra*, 23.

ceeded but slowly has already been attributed in part to the geographical position and military functions of the county. There were other circumstances tending to the same end.

In the first place, a large fraction of the area of the county—perhaps two-fifths—was forest.[1] The whole of the Wirral peninsula was afforested. Almost the whole area between the Gowy and the Weaver was embraced within the metes and bounds of the twin forests of Mara and Mondrem,[2] while in the east, the forest of Macclesfield extended along the western Pennine slopes for some ten miles.

These large areas were not, of course, wholly devoted to deer. Within the forest bounds there were many vills, each with its arable land, its waste, its mill, just as in the lands outside the bounds. The conditions of forest-tenure did, however, militate against the development of agriculture, and large tracts of waste between the vills remained uncultivated for centuries.

In addition to the forest lands, there were certain marshy areas the economic value of which was very small. For several miles the southern bank of the Mersey consists of very low land which even modern drainage has failed to render valuable. In the Middle Ages many hundreds of acres of this land were too wet for cultivation. Stanlaw marsh produced quantities of reeds which were used for covering the booths at Chester Fairs.[3] Elton moss provided turf for St. Werburgh's abbey.[4] Ince marsh and Frodsham marsh were broad wastes for the drainage of which a costly scheme was undertaken in the fourteenth century.[5] The Mersey at times overflowed its banks and wrought great damage. About the beginning of the thirteenth century it swept away thirty carucates of land in Wirral and Ince.[6] Later in the century it inundated several times a large area at Stanlaw and rendered the site of the abbey untenable.[7] In the fourteenth century it flooded the meadows at Frodsham,[8] and although defensive works were constructed—an embankment at Stanlaw[9] and dykes at Frodsham[10]—they do not appear to have wholly achieved their object.[11]

The Dee also was sometimes a menace to land and property along

[1] See Appendix A, 169.

[2] During the period covered by this work, the two forests were almost invariably treated as one area. For convenience, therefore, the modern name "Delamere" (foresta de la Mara) is used in the following pages to designate the joint area.

For a conjecture respecting the boundary between the forests, *vide infra*, 12.

[3] Morris, *Chester*, 250 and 565.

[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 6.

[5] *Vide infra*, 19.

[6] Ormerod, II, 12.

[7] *Ann. Cest.*, 107 (date 1279); Mortimer, *Hundred of Wirral*, 259; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, V, 644.

[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 188, and *vide infra*, 32, 33, *n.* 1.

[9] This embankment is still visible.

[10] *Vide infra*, 19.

[11] The sea was making encroachments at Frodsham early in the fifteenth century. *Recog. Rolls*, 28.

its banks. Not only was it reputed to change its fords ;[1] it was liable to floods which swept away the causeway, destroyed the mills at Chester,[2] and even carried away the important bridge itself. The Roodee was often flooded at high tide, and there was at least one marshy tract on its banks.[3] In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, moreover, the river flowed down a deeper, wider estuary, washing over some thousands of acres which are now reclaimed land.[4]

In addition to forest, marsh and waste, three areas merit separate mention. Asylums—at Hoole Heath near Chester, at Overmarsh near Farndon, and at Rudheath near Middlewich—were set apart as secular sanctuaries.[5] There can be no doubt that these three asylums were regions of less than average fertility.[6] All three are frequently mentioned in the records of mediæval Cheshire, especially Rudheath, a sanctuary some eleven or twelve square miles in area on the east of the Weaver. Overmarsh, a somewhat smaller sanctuary on the right bank of the Dee, was defined as " a waste place surrounded by an old ditch . . . assigned for the dwelling-place of foreigners of any country seeking protection of the earl of Chester, or coming to his aid in time of war." [7] Concerning the third area, an inquisition in 1342 found that all lawful men of the earl of Chester and the king of England were wont in time of war in Wales to have refuge in Hoole Heath for a year and a day.[8]

It is now evident that against the advantages of climate, flatness, fertility and access to the sea must be placed certain disadvantages, namely extensive forests and deer-parks, a marshy area and three extensive sanctuaries. A large fraction of the county's surface was unsuitable or unavailable for the production of food. In short, the county could not support a large population.

In this respect Cheshire was by no means exceptional. Excluding the sanctuaries, similar conditions operated in the adjoining counties and, indeed, in many parts of England. It is only necessary to bear in mind that a region which may seem to have enjoyed great natural advantages, was in fact comparatively unproductive and comparatively thinly populated.[9]

[1] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae* (R.S.), 139. Higden copies him in *Polychronicon*, II, 26.

[2] *Ann. Cest.*, 106; *Polychronicon*, VIII, 334; and *vide infra*, 39, *n.* 3.

[3] At Saltney. *Recog. Rolls*, 477.

[4] On the silting of the Dee estuary, *vide infra*, 141-142.

[5] It has generally been held that these three secular sanctuaries were provided for advowry (or avowry) men, but Mr. R. Stewart-Brown dissents from this view and points out that the profits of the advowries were let separately for each Hundred in 1320. " The Avowries of Cheshire," in *E.H.R.*, XXIX, 48, 51, 55.

[6] Concerning these three places see Appendix B, 171.

[7] Cal. of Deeds, etc., in *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVII, Appendix 103.

[8] Ormerod, II, 813.

[9] One is driven to emphasis in asserting a commonplace by misleading statements which disregard history. For example, so eminent a geographer as Dr.

Although a discussion of the machinery of government in the palatine county does not fall within the purview of an economic study, it is desirable to indicate very briefly a few factors which, though constitutional rather than economic, are nevertheless relevant to the work as a whole.

In the first place, the earldom of Chester was distinguished clearly from the kingdom of England. It was a political unit of great importance, analogous indeed to the semi-independent states of France and Germany.[1] Men felt that it stood between Wales and England, being part of neither. "He and his army returned to England," wrote a Welsh chronicler, of the departure of Henry II from Chester.[2] "He (Edward I) left Chester and returned to England," wrote a Chester annalist,[3] and in the Magna Carta of Cheshire,[4] the barons living on the earl's lands in other counties are referred to as his "knights from England." [5]

This powerful earldom had lapsed to the crown in 1237 and had been re-granted by Henry III to his son Edward. The county was not yet, however, merged into England.[6] Throughout the Middle Ages it retained much of its distinct system of government. It sent to the Parliament at Westminster neither citizens nor knights. It was administered from Chester by a Justice appointed by the king, and although after the conquest of Wales by Edward I, the danger of Welsh aggression was diminished, the county continued to look towards Wales. The men of Cheshire fought in Scotland; the knights and men of Cheshire fought in France, but the original purpose of the palatinate was not forgotten. Military service was still defined in terms of wars in Wales, and Cheshire knights were under no obligation to serve "beyond the Lyme." [7]

M. Newbigin writes of the region covered by the Northwich Sheet (44): "Now the wealth of old England was agricultural, and the number of mansions, many with historic names, suggests that the region *must always have been agriculturally rich. This suggestion is confirmed* by the number of farms. . . ." *Ordnance Survey Maps* (London, 1913), 107. That the region has *not* "always been agriculturally rich" the following pages will show.

[1] Tout, *Edward I*, 16.

[2] *Brut Y Tywysogion*, 203.

[3] *Ann. Cest.*, 73.

[4] *Vide infra*, 9.

[5] Cf. also "all the manors and lands that Roger has in England and Cestreshire," *C.Cl.R.* (1327-1330), 398, and "£100 of land in a suitable place in England or in Cestreshire." *Ibid.* (1333-1337), 491.

[6] The distinctive position of Cheshire is well illustrated by the exclusion of the county from the incidence of certain taxes. For example, when Parliament in 1371 granted the king a subsidy of £50,000, "levied from all parishes in the realm," the county of Chester was explicitly excluded. *C.F.R.* (1368-1377), 124.

[7] "Extra Lymam," translated broadly by Dr. Tait "beyond the eastern boundary of Cheshire." *Chester Chartulary*, 102 *et seq.*

In a plea to a writ quo warranto in 1359, the duke of Lancaster, as Constable of Chester and Baron of Halton, claimed not to be compelled to serve beyond the Clwyd nor anywhere beyond the bounds of the county. Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 59.

Although the earldom remained henceforth in royal hands, the administration of the county of Chester differed from that of other counties.[1] In addition to the sheriff, escheator, foresters, bailiffs of royal manors and itinerant serjeants, there were two higher officials of great importance. The first was the Justice. Broadly speaking he was in charge of the whole administration, including the maintenance of the castles. The importance of this office was increased by the conquest of Wales, for Edward arranged that part of North Wales should be administered from Chester, and made the justice responsible for the maintenance of the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan. At the same time another important change was made. Hitherto the justice had been responsible to the king for the issues of his bailiwick. The office was now held at ferm usually of 1000 marks. Among the more important justices are Reginald de Grey (1270-1274, 1281-1299), Payn Tybotot (1309-1311), Robert de Holland (1307-1309, 1311-1312), and Oliver de Ingham (1322-1325).

The second great official was the chamberlain. His work was chiefly fiscal, and he drew up (in the Exchequer at Chester) detailed accounts of income and expenditure. It was his duty to supply large sums of money for the earl's household and for his personal expenses.[2] The chamberlain's salary was £20 a year and an occasional fee.[3] The office was seldom held for many years.[4] Indeed between 1342 and 1354, it was held by no fewer than nine different men.[5]

Lying in the march of Wales and offering a shelter for criminals fleeing from justice, the county presented problems of government which differed from those in many other counties. Disorder was common, and the people were impatient of restraint. The earl's arbitrary will made itself felt, and there was no constitutional check. The Black Prince's income was utterly inadequate for the extravagances in which he delighted, and harsh means were taken to extract more and more revenue from Cheshire.[6] It is not surprising, therefore, that the officials from the highest to the lowest were at one time or another the subject of bitter complaints.

Dissatisfaction occasionally took the form of violence, and commonly of an appeal to the ancient rights and customs of the county,

[1] "The details of the administrative system of Wales and Cheshire after 1284 have not yet been fully worked out." Tout, *Edward II*, 375. There are a few notes on the administration in Tout, *Chapters*, II, 169-170.

[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, XVIII. The importance of the revenue forwarded is noticed in Tout, *Chapters*, II, 174.

[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, XIII.

[4] One Chamberlain, Richard de Bury, subsequently became bishop of Durham. *C.P.R.* (1334-1338), 109, 120.

[5] Their names are collected in *The Rights and Jurisdiction of the County Palatine of Chester* (C.S., Vol. 37), 29.

[6] *Vide infra*, 16-18.

many of which were, of course, of a much earlier date than the royal possession of the earldom. The most important statement of rights is contained in the document known as the Magna Carta of Cheshire.[1] This was a charter drawn up in 1215 or 1216, and granted by earl Ranulph III, prior to his departure for the Holy Land.[2] This charter, which was confirmed by the lord Edward at the time the earldom was conferred upon him, and again in 1300,[3] covers a wide field and is "more rigidly feudal" than the English Magna Carta.[4] Several of the clauses are tantamount to an admission that the military service rendered by the knights of Cheshire is the maximum that can, with wisdom, be exacted. Dr. Tait summarises this aspect of the charter thus :—

> "The heavy drain which the almost constant state of war with the Welsh made upon the very limited resources . . . of the palatinate is reflected in the clauses insisting on the due performance of military obligations, exempting the barons from compulsory service elsewhere, giving them all the possible relief from duty allowed by castleguard service at Chester due from other parts of the earl's fief, forbidding the enlistment of their villeins, and permitting them as well as the earl to encourage strangers to settle on their lands as avowry men." [5]

Other clauses grant the barons the "right to assart their lands within the arable area of the forest and to grow crops on lands formerly cultivated and free from wood without payment,[6] to take housebote and haybote in their woods without the supervision of a forester, to give and sell dead wood to whomsoever they will." Finally, the earl's itinerant serjeants are to be limited to twelve in time of peace ; none of them are to be quartered on the baron's demesnes, and tenants shall not be compelled to buy special food for them.

In short, we are studying a region of about a thousand square miles, in royal hands, but distinct from the kingdom both in its administration and in the rights and obligations of its people.[7]

[1] *Chester Chartulary*, 102.
[2] He did not, however, set out for Jerusalem until 1218. *Ann. Cest.*, 51.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 499.
[4] Dr. Tait in *Chartulary of Chester Abbey*, 107. [5] *Ibid.*, 107.
[6] This right was the subject of much controversy ; *vide infra*, 11-17.
[7] There were also certain features in which Cheshire was distinct from England in respect of law. See *County Ct. Rolls*, ed. R. Stewart-Brown (C.S., 1925), Intro, xl, and xviii, xxxviii, xxxix.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAND.

It has already been shown that a large proportion of the area of mediæval Cheshire was occupied by forest, marsh, wood and waste and that the cultivation of the remainder was retarded by the frequency of wars which devastated the land and withdrew the manhood of the county from agriculture to arms. Even before the Conquest, there were waste manors in the Welsh borderland,[1] and the fearful harrying of the county by the Conqueror in 1070 laid waste nearly two hundred more.[2] For two centuries there was war in the march land. For two centuries this region could make little progress in agriculture. And since the population was sparse, the problem of securing an adequate food supply had probably not been so urgent as in regions which enjoyed more peace.

At the beginning of our period, therefore, Cheshire must be ranked among the less developed regions. It was only in the valleys that there were large vills, and the Dee valley was still hardly safe for habitation.[3] From the Pennines to the Weaver stretched an area of moorland and forest marked here and there by a few little vills and two larger ones, Congleton and Macclesfield. Between the Weaver and the Gowy lay the twin forests of Mara and Mondrem, while the whole of Wirral was afforested and parts of the Mersey's banks were marshy. The area under cultivation, therefore, was small.

But an increasing population had already necessitated some enlargement of the bounds of cultivation, and throughout the period under consideration, the work of reclamation was being gradually pushed forward.[4] The work proceeded slowly and laboriously, and some of

[1] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 7, *n.* 2. [2] *Ibid.*, 7.

[3] A petition (date about 1300) of the lord of Cholmondeley for a place of burial stated that the chapel of Cholmondeley was four miles from Malpas. . . . "And the dead in time of war are buried in the fields because the church of Malpas is so near Wales that part of the parish belongs to the Welsh. . . . Wherefore the English dare not go to the said church in time of war. And . . . at one time . . . no Englishman dared go to Malpas on Easter Day for fear of the Welsh." *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd Series, Vol. I (1896), 103.

[4] I have not thought it desirable to treat separately assarts, purprestures, and new ploughings. For the purposes of this chapter, they are grouped together.

it would, of course, escape mention in any document. Yet the " Forest Rolls " and " Rentals " of the period afford abundant evidence of assarting, new ploughing and enclosing in many parts of the county and especially in Wirral. Progress was, however, impeded by the fact that many of the vills lay in, or near,[1] the forests where the right to assart land was liable to be disputed. This is not the place for a discussion of the legal aspects of enclosure, but since the welfare of the community was involved, it is necessary to deal in outline with a situation that was complicated by a conflict of chartered rights, ancient custom and administrative practice.

The key of the situation lay in the eighth clause of earl Ranulf's charter,[2] granted in 1215 (or 1216) and confirmed by Edward I in 1300.[3] Here the earl had granted to his barons the right " to assart their lands within the arable area of the forest and to grow crops on lands formerly cultivated and free from wood, without payment " ; [4] and by another clause, the privileges granted to barons were assured to their knights and freeholders.

The rights thus granted did not remain unchallenged. An inquisition of 1275 [5] found that whereas the men of Wirral had been wont to assart their land in accordance with the terms of the charter, " in the time of Sir Thomas de Boulton,[6] justice of Chester, the foresters of Wirral by his order attached the men of Wirral for such ploughings and tilth, and exacted amends from them. The men attached appeared before the justice and justified the tilth by the before-mentioned charter. The same men were again attached in the time of Sir Reginald de Grey,[7] justice of Chester, for similar tilth and made the same answer."

The men of Wirral, it will be observed, contended that they had the right, and were wont, to assart land without any payment. In the forests of Delamere and of Macclesfield, other conditions prevailed. In Delamere men were " always wont to assart in their own foreign woods where, by the oath of the foresters and twelve lawful men, it could be done without nuisance to the forest, and to pay for each acre between Peytevinnisti and Uuevere (= Weaver, i.e., River Weaver (?)) towards Nantwich 5s., and for every acre on the other side of Peytevinnisti

[1] Owners of lands near, but not actually in, the forest sometimes suffered considerable inconvenience. The estates of Vale Royal abbey, for example, had been disafforested but the foresters infringed the abbot's rights over his lands and woods. *V.R.L. Book*, 53-54.

[2] *Chester Chartulary*, 102.

[3] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 499.

[4] " . . . et si landa aut terra infra divisas ville sue fuerit que prius culta fuit, ubi nemus non crescat, liceat eis illam colere sine herbergacione. . . ."

[5] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, No. 975.

[6] Justice 1267-1270—*Ann. Cest.*, 99, 101.

[7] Justice 1270-1274—*Ibid.*, 101, 103. (He was justice again 1281-1299.)

towards Frodsham half a mark."[1] In short, they were accustomed to make a fine on bringing land into cultivation.

Concerning the customs of the forest of Macclesfield, evidence is less abundant, but the practice as recorded in the Forest Rolls appears to be this: when land was assarted, it was rented by a fine, at a fixed yearly sum, usually 8d. an acre.[2]

The customs vary, therefore, with the locality.[3] In Wirral, new land is cultivated without payment; in Delamere, on payment of a fixed sum at the time of enclosure; and in the forest of Macclesfield, on payment of a certain sum yearly. Already customs are not identical with the liberty granted by the charter, and a further departure both from the charter and the customs arises in the practice of requiring licences[4] to enclose and cultivate land in the forest. Since this practice involved an infringement of what was deemed to be an ancient right, it was bitterly contested by the men of the county, and indeed formed one of the causes of the rising of 1353.[5]

But the complexity of the subject must not be allowed to obscure the fact that throughout our period, and in all parts of the county, the work of enlarging the cultivated area was making gradual progress. In Wirral especially areas both great and small were assarted. The

[1] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, No. 975. The proper name, Peytevinnisti is obscure. It occurs again in *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. I, No. 1105, where it is spelt Peytevinnestey and Peytivinnisty (= Poitevin's way ?). It is described as a public way and apparently ran roughly east-west but I have been unable to locate it. In *V.R.L. Book*, 142, it is spelt Paytefynsty and it is said to "descend to the commons of Codynton." A petition from the commonalty of Mara and Mondrem to the Black Prince in 1351 ("T.R. Book," 279, fol. 37) states that the approvements had hitherto been made on payment of half a mark an acre in Mara and five shillings an acre in Mondrem. If this be taken as a precise statement and not a broad generalisation, then it would appear that Peytevinnisti (or some part of it) formed the boundary between the two forests. This would be an important identification. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that the boundary between the two forests ran near Codynton (Cuddington). It is, of course, possible that there were two roads, or a road and a stream, bearing the same name. It is also possible that the road changed its direction considerably, and that only part of it was a boundary. On the whole it seems probable that Peytevinnisti ran (in part at any rate) along the boundary between the two forests which even at that date were usually considered as merged into one.

[2] "Assize Rolls"—Chester, 17/12, m. 2.

[3] Concerning the practice in other parts of England see *Select Pleas of the Forest* (ed. G. J. Turner) (Selden Society, xiii), LXXVIII.

[4] Cf. a grant of lands at Helsby with the following condition: "ad libitum abbatis Cestrie de licencia domini Cestrisirie assartandis," *Chester Chartulary*, 393. The practice of issuing licences to enclose and cultivate land applied also to Rudheath. The abbot and convent of Dieulacres approved 1240 acres of the waste land there "by virtue of letters patent of Edward I, while he was Earl of Chester." *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 191. A group of four men (three Vernons and a Grosvenor) jointly obtained for a fine of £113 6s. 8d. licence to approve 453½ acres of their land on the waste of Rudheath. *Chamber. Accts*, 86.

[5] *Vide infra*, 17.

greater progress of this region may be attributed in part to the easier conditions of assarting already mentioned, and in part to the vigour and example of the abbots of Chester, a large part of whose extensive estates lay in the peninsula.[1]

Foremost among these abbots was Simon of Whitchurch (1265-1291) [2] during whose tenure of office the abbatial estates were improved and enlarged by the felling of timber,[3] the use of marl [4] and the assarting of many areas. A regard of the forest in 24 Edward I showed that he had brought into cultivation strips of heath and waste in Wirral aggregating more than 140 acres.[5] His successor, Thomas Burchells, was charged with making purprestures,[6] and in 1305 he made an agreement dividing a heath near his manor of Eastham with Agnes de Arderne and others, with a clause to the effect that if the heath should be taken into cultivation, Agnes and the other parties might enclose one acre for every two acres enclosed by the Abbot.[7] In 1333, abbot William of Bebington was reported to have assarted 400 acres of waste in Wirral without licence and the justice was ordered to inquire into the matter.[8] The same abbot obtained a licence from Thomas de Vernon to enclose and cultivate all the waste of Hulse (on Rudheath).[9] His successor, Richard de Sainsbury (1349-1362), had to pay amercements amounting to £19 8s. for "fresh ploughing" and digging marl in the forest of Wirral.[10] He was further amerced 31s. 8d. for a similar offence, but as he claimed that he had not exceeded his rights, execution was delayed pending inquiry.[11] In 1357 he was pardoned for making an enclosure at Hall Sutton in Wirral.[12]

The heads of the other religious houses were pursuing a similar policy. In the forest of Wirral, purprestures were made by the prior of Birkenhead and the abbots of Basingwerk and Vale Royal.[13] The prior of Birkenhead cultivated new land in Claughton, enclosed waste

[1] For the location of these estates *vide infra*, 27.

[2] The dates are those given by Dr. Tait in his *Chester Chartulary*, XXVI. The date of abbot Simon's death has been the subject of controversy. See *Ann. Cest.*, 116, *n.* 2, and *Liber Luciani*, 91.

[3] For the felling of oaks *vide infra*, 91.

[4] For the use of marl *vide infra*, 21-22.

[5] "Harl." MS. 2149/118. The largest areas mentioned are: Irby, 20 acres; Greasby, 16 acres; Bromborough, 17 acres; Plumyards, 28 acres; Whitby, 16 acres. Further details of his work are in "Forest Roll"—Chester, 33/1, m. 12. "Harl." 2149 contains transcripts of documents relative to forest proceedings in Cheshire in 31, 32 and 33 Edward I which I have been unable to trace at the Public Record Office.

[6] "Harl." MS. 2149/120 h.

[7] *Chester Chartulary*, 97.

[8] *C.F.R.* (1327-1337), 351.

[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 495. The deed is undated, but the abbot's name is William (of Bebington), 1324-1349. For further cultivation in Rudheath by the abbot of Chester see "Forest Roll"—Chester, 33/1, m. 11. And for a grant by the abbot to cultivate 270 acres on Rudheath, see *Chester Chartulary*, 405.

[10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 169-170.

[11] *Ibid.*, 200.

[12] Morris, *Chester*, 125.

[13] "Harl." MS. 2149/130.

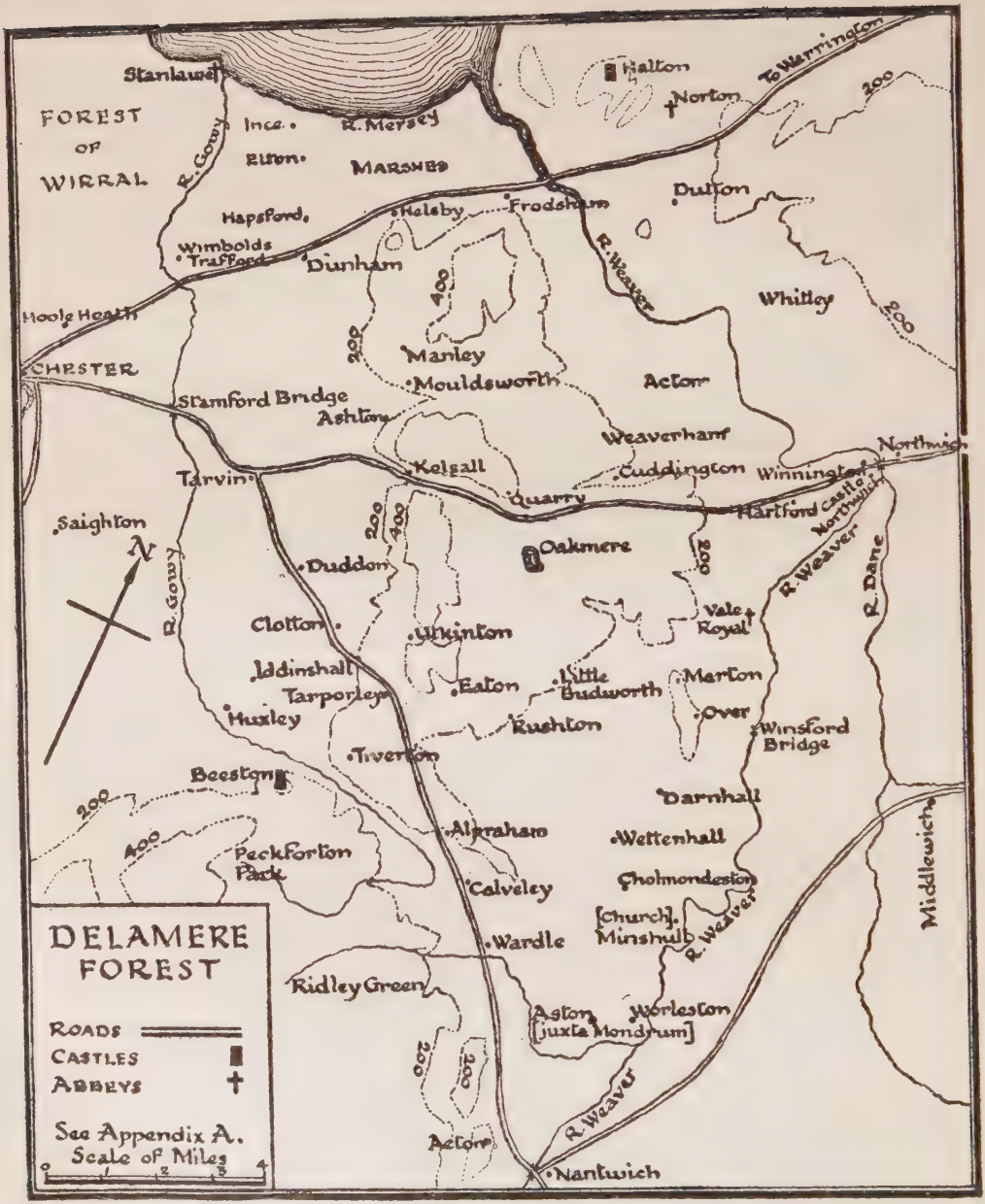
in Wolveton,[1] and assarted an area of twenty acres called Tholstowe.[2] He also obtained permission to enclose thirty acres.[3] The abbot of Whalley was fined 8s. 6d. for enclosing a small wood and for ploughing certain land near his grange of Stanney.[4] The brethren of the house of lepers at Bebington received a licence to enclose and cultivate five acres of their own waste in the forest,[5] while further east near Rudheath the prior of Norton enclosed eight acres.[6]

The laity also were active in reclaiming land: "Warin le Grosvenor," the abbot of Darnhall complains, "made purprestures after the earl's death year by year, and day by day, upon the King in the forest (viz. of Delamere) and upon the abbot and convent of Darnhall of 80 acres of land and more."[7] A few years later, he made a memorandum that "Richard, son of Warin le Grosvenor, was attached (in 1299) for the enclosure of a certain piece of land in the waste of the forest of la Mare . . . and he was prohibited . . . from working any further in that place. But . . . he enclosed the whole piece. . . ."[8] The abbot's indignation was not unnatural, but the implication that the Grosvenor family were exceeding their rights was possibly unjust, for the Grosvenors maintained that they had the right to approve their lands at will. When the regarders and foresters in 22 Edward I reported that Warin le Grosvenor had made certain assarts and enclosures, Warin produced a charter of Hugh, earl of Chester, by which the vill of (Little) Budworth had been granted to his ancester with the right to cultivate, inhabit and otherwise make profit of it, and this right was allowed.[9]

Other families made similar claims. At the regard of 20-21 Edward III, for example, Robert Kenyon claimed the right of assarting his lands in the arable part of Capenhurst in the forest of Wirral—"and if there be lands within those bounds formerly cultivated on which wood is not growing, he may cultivate them without payment."[10] Richard, the clerk of Moreton, and many others made the same claim in respect of their lands, and added the same clause,[11] obviously referring to the terms of Earl Ranulf's charter already cited.

The privilege of assarting land within certain bounds was claimed,

[1] "Forest Roll"—Chester, 33/2, m. 2. [2] Ibid., m. 3, *in dorso*.
[3] Harrison, *Ancient Forests, Chases and Deer Parks in Cheshire*, 50.
[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 201. [5] *C.P.R.* (1282-1292), 74.
[6] "Forest Roll"—Chester, 33/1, m. 11, *in dorso*. All the instances in this paragraph are taken from the reign of Edward I.
[7] *V.R.L. Book*, 43-44. The convent of Darnhall moved to Vale Royal.
[8] *Ibid.*, 90.
[9] "Forest Roll"—Chester, 33/1, m. 7. The charter is printed in Ormerod, II, 211.
[10] "Forest Proceedings"—Chester, 33/4, m. 20.
[11] Ibid., mm. 20, 21, 23, 25, 27. The scribe has rendered the meaning somewhat less clear by the omission of a few words. He writes ". . . et si landa aut terra infra divisas illas que prius culta fuit, ubi nemus non cressit, liceat eis illam colere sine herbergacione." For the actual terms of the charter *vide supra*, 11, *n.* 4.


Stanlaw
FOREST OF WIRRAL
R. Gowy
Ince
Elton
R. Mersey
MARSHES
Halton
To Warrington
Norton
200
Hapsford
Helsby
Frodsham
Dutton
Wimbolds Trafford
Dunham
R. Weaver
400
200
Whitley
Hoole Heath
CHESTER
Manley
Mouldsworth
Acton
Stamford Bridge
Ashton
Weaverham
Northwich
Tarvin
Kelsall
Cuddington
Winnington
Quarry
Hartford
Castle Northwich
Saighton
Oakmere
Duddon
R. Weaver
R. Dane
Clotton
Ulkington
Vale Royal
Iddinshall
Eaton
Little Budworth
Marton
Tarporley
Huxley
Rushton
Over
Winsford Bridge
Tiverton
Beeston
Darnhall
Alpraham
Wettenhall
Peckforton Park
Calveley
Cholmondeston
[Church] Minshull
Middlewich
Wardle
R. Weaver
Ridley Green
Aston [juxta Mondrum]
Worleston
Acton
R. Weaver
Nantwich
DELAMERE FOREST
ROADS
CASTLES
ABBEYS
See Appendix A.
Scale of Miles
0
1
2
3
4

therefore, as a right, and the right was exercised. In all parts of the county, laymen as well as ecclesiastics were adding new areas to those already under cultivation. Forest rolls, rentals, manorial extents, licences to enclose, pardons for enclosing without licence, and inquisitions respecting the right to enclose,[1] all point to the gradual encroachment of the cultivator on the waste. In one place, it is merely two parts of an acre.[2] In another it is more than two hundred acres.[3] Such a process was, of course, a normal accompaniment of the growth of communities.

The process was, however, subject to investigation, and such investigation, whether by a special commission or by a " regard," or by an eyre, was disliked. The whole community petitioned the king, in 32 Edward I, against a commission appointed to inquire into " assarts, purpestures and frussuras." [4] A commission in 33 Edward I practically reaffirmed the ancient custom as regards the reclamation of land in Delamere and the waste of Rudheath ; approvers of land paid 6s. 8d. an acre for the land reclaimed (provided it was not to the damage of the forest) but paid no other yearly rent ; and land lying within the forest which had been cultivated and was not wooded (called in English Rugge and Reve) [5] could be approved at will without view or licence and without fine, subject always to the charge of 6s. 8d. per acre of land approved.[6]

There were periodic regards of the forests, but by far the most important investigations took place between 1347 and 1358. In the first twenty years of the reign of Edward III, no pleas of the forest had been held in Cheshire.[7] A large volume of business had accumulated, there-

[1] " Forest Proceedings "—Chester, 33/1, especially membranes 6, 7, 11, 12 ; Chester, 33/2, mm. 2, 3 ; Chester, 33/3, m. 4 ; Chester, 33/4, mm. 12, 18, 21, 23, 25, 27 ; " Assize Rolls "—Chester, 17/12, mm. 2, 6.

V.R.L. Book, 92, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 109, 112. " An Early Rental of Sir Peter de Thornton " (printed in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, 1896), 55, 58.

Chamber. Accts., 187 ; 131, 169 ; 213, 228 ; 241, 242, 247 ; 91, 201, 271. *Recog. Rolls*, 323, 512. *C.P.R.* (1327-1330), 346. *Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 6475. Ormerod, II, 334, 335, 496, 544, 812 ; III, 735, 736. A transcript of an extent of the manor of Tarvin includes twenty acres " que possunt assartari et frussari." " Harl." MS. 2115/230.

[2] " Forest Rolls "—Chester, 33/1, m. 12. Walterus de Hoton frussavit in Hoton post ultimam regardam duas partes unius acre de bruere.

[3] " Assize Rolls "—Chester, 17/12, m. 2 (Presentatum est . . . quod apud Haselegh in solo Rogeri de Monte Alto assartati sunt decies viginti acre et septem acre et dimidia de purpresture . . .). The abbot and Convent of Dieulacres approved 240 acres of waste land in Rudheath. *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 191.

[4] " Harl." MS. 2149/121.

[5] Ubi nemus non cressit qui Anglice dicitur Rugge et Reve.

[6] " Harl." MS. 2149/121-122.

[7] The regards were not held very regularly. William de Stanley, forester, of the forest of Wirral, reported in 1349-1350 that the regard " was wont to be held every third year," but it was postponed from 1349-1350 (when it was due) to 1350-1351, " on account of the coming of the lord's council." *Chamber. Accts.*,

fore, and the eyre held at Chester in 1347 acted with great vigour.[1] In addition to the usual instances of dogs not lawed, buildings erected without licence and marlpits opened, there were very many instances of purprestures. Judgments followed, very heavy fines were made,[2] and again the question of ancient custom was raised, in a very serious form. The justices endeavoured to override the ancient customs of the forests. In Wirral, where hitherto men had assarted their land without charge, men were now to be amerced for "fresh ploughings." In Delamere, where the fine of 5s. or 6s. 8d. per acre for fresh ploughing was customary, a charge was now to be made for crops [3] as well as "new ploughing." Such an extension of the earl's power naturally roused deep resentment, and the records of the period leave no doubt as to the motives actuating the earl's ministers: they were endeavouring to raise revenue. Protests from the men of the forests make no reference, of course, to such a motive, but simply state the ancient rights of dwellers in the forests and beg that their usages may be tested and their charters inspected.[4] Two years later, amercements amounting to more than £360 remained unpaid [5] and the Black Prince so far relented as to delay the execution of writs already issued till he should have fuller knowledge.[6]

But the trouble was by no means ended, and the question of approving land was only one of the factors in a situation that was growing bitter. Long lists of grievances were forwarded to the Black Prince, covering the whole field of forest administration and contrasting established customs with the practices it was now sought to impose. The keeping of greyhounds, the digging of turves, the carrying of bows, the pannage of swine, the taking of housebote and haybote, the lawing of dogs, common of pasture—on all these subjects the people were aggrieved.[7] The prince, in response, directed the justice and chamberlain to mitigate the amercements "as their consciences shall dictate." [8] The question of ancient rights, apparently, he ignored.

This was the situation in May, 1351. How far the justice and chamberlain succeeded in appeasing the men of the forests it is difficult

147, 161, 200. This delay of one year was carried forward and the next regard of the forests of Delamere and Macclesfield was held in 1353-1354, while that of Wirral was respited till the next eyre (*ibid.*, 207), which the forester of Wirral predicted would occur after Easter in 1355. "Eaton" MS., Edward III/110.

No regard was made in 1326-1327 (*Chamber. Accts.*, 102). The Accounts for 1328, 1334-1336, 1342-1343, 1347-1348 bear no reference to a regard, and Dr. Cox states that no pleas of the forest had been held for over twenty years. (*Royal Forests of England*, 134.) The earliest Forest Rolls at the Public Record Office for this reign (Chester, 33/3 and 33/4) are for 21 Edward III.

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 125, 126. [2] *Ibid.*, 130-131.

[3] A charge for crops was customary elsewhere. Turner, *Select Pleas of the Forest*, LXXXVIII.

[4] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 37. *Chamber. Accts.*, 131, 169.

[5] *Ibid.*, 131, 169. [6] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 37.

[7] Ibid., fols. 40-43, 43-44, 45. [8] Ibid., 45.

to determine ; but the policy of raising revenue by one means or another was not abandoned. From Chester a fine of £300 was to be obtained and pressure was brought to bear on the citizens to pay the sum in as few years as possible.[1]

From the forest of Wirral, it was intended to raise a large sum in respect of " outrages and trespasses committed in the forest." A list of offenders with a note on their wealth was sent to the prince and he had a schedule of fines drawn up. The nature of the fines and the purpose of the proceeding may be inferred from the letter forwarded to the justice and chamberlain. " But if it can be genuinely found and they conscientiously know it to be a fact," the letter runs, " that any persons are fined too outrageously, the prince is quite willing that they certify him who the persons are and how much they are fined, so that he may take advice as to what should be done." [2]

In November of the same year, the prince returned to the subject of lands and forests. " Have transcripts made and sent quickly to the prince," the letter runs, " of all the evidence and memoranda touching his forests, and also all recognizances, obligations, and other bonds of current debts and penalties wherefrom the prince might obtain any rightful profit by forfeiture or otherwise." [3]

Enough has been written to illustrate one aspect of the Black Prince's policy with regard to his earldom of Chester. That the continued pursuit of such a policy in a region so turbulent as Cheshire should lead to an outbreak of violence, was natural enough. In many parts of England shortage of food and the attempt to regulate wages had caused discontent. To these grievances were added in Cheshire the heavy fines made before the justices and the infringement of ancient customs. Already in 1347 the commonalty had declared that the eyre itself was " harmful to the laws and customs of the county " and had offered to make a fine of 5000 marks on condition that the eyre should cease and certain liberties be granted. The prince had accepted the fine and granted a respite of the eyre for thirty years.[4] Another eyre was, however, held at Chester in 1353 and this appears to have been the immediate cause of the rising. The proceedings were protracted and it was necessary to protect the justices. The Black Prince, the duke of Lancaster, and the earls of Warwick and of Stafford therefore marched into the county with their men. Against this display of force the men of Cheshire were powerless. They agreed, therefore, to make a fine of

[1] " T.R. Book," 50, 52.

[2] Ibid., 279, fol. 19. The fines for 37 men are given and they vary from £200 to a few marks. Considerable difficulties faced the justice and chamberlain in any effort to secure payment. Ibid., 51, 64-65. [3] Ibid., 92.

[4] *C. Chart. R.* (1341-1417), 313-315. The commonalty made a recognisance for payment of the sum stated, but the *Chamberlains' Accounts* contain no indication that payment had begun before the question rose again in 1353.

5000 marks on condition that they should be exempt from the eyre. A second time the fine was accepted, and when the whole affair appeared to be closed, the justices sat again and seized lands and tenements and levied very many big fines.[1]

Overpowered and cowed, the county had soon to submit to still worse measures. The newly cultivated lands were again measured [2] and the justices of the Forest, sitting at Chester and Macclesfield in 1357,[3] inflicted huge fines for "new ploughings and sowing their lands with corn, waste and destruction of woods, building of houses and windmills, making bricks, and for trespasses of vert and venison" from the time when the earldom came into the hands of Henry III (viz., 1237) down to the date of the eyre.[4] Among the fines are the following :—

The community of the forest of Delamere	£2000	0	0
The community of the forest of Wirral .	1000	0	0
The abbot of Chester	100	0	0
John de Strafford	57	18	0
Robert de Legh	88	15	$8\frac{3}{4}$
Earl of Salisbury	142	12	8
Thomas Fitton	100	0	0

Payment of these fines was to be spread over a period of three, four or five years and the *Chamberlains' Accounts* show that the first two instalments were duly collected.[5]

The magnitude of these fines exceeded anything the county had ever known.[6] They are not to be explained on any basis of equity, but are best understood in the light of the Black Prince's character. This young prince was continually in need of money.[7] His elaborate jousts, his magnificent hospitality, his numerous gifts augmented a burden of debt the weight of which fell very heavily on Cheshire. Faced with an income insufficient for the indulgence of his extravagant tastes, he

[1] *Chronicon Henrici Knighton* (Rolls Series, 1895), Vol. II, 75. Knighton refers to the "enormous offences" of the men of Cheshire, but does not indicate any particular offence. A first payment of £825 16s. 8d. towards the total figure was made in 1353-1354, and the account states that the community were to have respite of the eyre for thirty years. *Chamber. Accts.*, 213. A further instalment was paid the following year. *Ibid.*, 228. The city of Chester made a fine of 500 marks. *Ibid.*, 213, 228.

[2] The expenses of the men measuring, the price of the cords and of a bag for containing the rolls of the eyre, are recorded. *Ibid.*, 242.

[3] Chester, 20 Sept. to 7 Oct. ; Macclesfield, 8-15 Oct. *Chamber. Accts.*, 241.

[4] *Ibid.*, 247.

[5] *Ibid.*, 248, 260. The remaining instalments may have been paid, but the last *Chamber. Accts.* extant is that for 1359-1360.

[6] Perhaps the biggest previous fine was one of £100 in which the community of Cheshire was amerced in the reign of Henry III. Letters Close of 1281 ordered the levying of the fine, and its appropriation to the building expenses of Vale Royal Abbey. *C.Cl.R.* (1279-1288), 89.

[7] Dunn-Pattison, *The Black Prince*, 55, 105-106, 128, 298.

ordered or allowed his ministers to exact bigger and bigger sums from the county. The revenue which in the period 1300-1312 had ranged between £1300 and £1880 a year, and had subsequently fallen far lower, was driven up to £3928 13s. 7½d. in 1353-1354 and £3449 11s. 8½d. in 1359-1360.[1] It was not, therefore, with a view to punishing illegal encroachment so much as raising revenue [2] that these huge sums were exacted. But the aspect which is of immediate importance is the effect of such a policy on the agricultural progress of the county. Not only were enterprising cultivators, both great and small, mercilessly impoverished. The whole work of reclaiming the waste was vexatiously hampered. When, after a lapse of several generations, peace had at last afforded opportunities for an advance, the men who had made headway were penalised by a prince who disregarded both the past and the future, and cared only for the satisfaction of his immediate whims.

Nevertheless, progress had been made. The plough had been pressed forward into the waste and many tracts of various sizes had been added to the cultivated area. Nor was the work confined to the heaths and uplands.

During the same period, steps were taken to render useful the great marsh which stretched along the bank of the Mersey from the Weaver to the Gowy, covering parts of the earl's manor of Frodsham, and the abbot of Chester's manor of Incc. The date of the earliest efforts to drain this waste is not known, but already in 1312 there existed a dike " towards the Weaver and the Mersey " (that is at the Frodsham end of the marsh), and in 1312-1313, a sum of more than £11 was spent in repairing and extending this dike, quantities of timber and branches being used in the work.[3] Operations near the Weaver were continued in 1315-1316 when the dike " towards the big meadow," the dike from the big meadow to Newchampool, the big sea dike " from middlegate as far as middledich " and the dike " towards the Weaver bank " were all cleaned out and repaired.[4]

Such works might be considered merely the periodic measures necessary for the maintenance of a drainage system. But the system was extended. In 1325, for example, the lessees of the manor of Frodsham undertook the construction of a dike, 84 perches in length for the protection of certain lands which were liable to inundation.[5] And in 1351, still bigger operations were undertaken. A large dike, the Holpulgote, had fallen into disrepair and was causing the flooding

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 214, 268.

[2] Knighton says quite simply: " Justiciarii . . . levaverunt pecuniam ultra mensuram . . . et fines multas fecerunt quasi sine numero." *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*, II, 75.

[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 81-82.

[4] " Ministers' Accounts," 801/12. Among the wages costs are 170 perches at ½d. and ¾d. for alternate perches, and 40 rods at 1d. and ¾d. for alternate rods.

[5] *C.Cl.R.* (1330-1333), 375.

of pastures. The Black Prince directed his commissioners to have the stoppage removed and to facilitate the flow of water down to the Mersey. The necessary timber was to be taken from Delamere forest, and since the dike was nearer to Ince than those mentioned above, the abbot of Chester was to be distrained to pay half the costs of the immediate repairs and of the future maintenance.[1] The abbot protested that he believed he was not liable for any such costs, but the prince was urgent about the completion of the work and the abbot agreed to bear half the expenses for this once.[2] He actually paid £21 3s. o½d. of the £42 6s. 1d. incurred on the work in the year 1350-1351.[3] The work itself was carried out under the supervision of the earl's carpenter, and consisted in the construction of a large channel (known as the Gote or Holpulgote) across the marsh, a certain amount of timber being used in the operation.[4]

We have, therefore, a region of about a thousand square miles in which the aggregate of the cultivated areas was relatively small, but gradually increasing. The region, though potentially fertile, could not yet be highly productive. William of Malmesbury had written : " it is barren and unproductive of cereals, especially of corn, as are many parts of the north, but abounding in beasts and fish. The natives delight in milk and butter ; the richer people live on flesh, and think much of bread made of barley and wheat." [5] These words moved Higden to declare that William must have been dreaming. The region, he declared, " has a plentiful supply of all kinds of food ; grain, flesh and fish, more especially the better kinds of salmon." [6] Higden's testimony must, however, be received with caution. Living at Chester in the fourteenth century, he had opportunities for observation, but he could not write of Chester without lavish praises.[7] That fish were abundant is amply attested by Domesday [8] and Giraldus Cambrensis,[9] and Lucian [10] as well as the two writers already quoted. That cattle were fairly numerous is probable. But Higden's claim that corn was abundant is at variance with the weight of the evidence. Lucian, another monk of Chester, indicated (about 1200) that the region was supplied (in part at any rate) with corn from England,[11] and numerous references during the Edwardian period show that in respect of corn, Cheshire, far from abounding, was not even self-sufficing. The Welsh wars naturally necessitated a large-scale importation of corn,[12] but importation had preceded the wars, continued during the peace between the

[1] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 10, item 19. [2] Ibid., fol. 27.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 165, 167.
[4] *Ibid.*, 167. In the account of the bailiff of Frodsham is an entry of 37s. 6d. " for hiring a wagon to carry timber from the forests to Holpulgote."
[5] Quoted in *Liber Luciani*, 21. [6] *Polychronicon*, II, 76-78.
[7] Cf. his remarks on the walls and masonry, and his verses, *ibid.*, 76-80.
[8] See Appendix F, 183. [9] *Itinerarium Kambriae*, VI, 139.
[10] *Liber Luciani*, 46. [11] *Ibid.*, 44. [12] *Vide infra*, 79-83.

wars, and was a prominent feature in the port of Chester during the first quarter of the fourteenth century.[1]

Increased productivity was, therefore, very desirable and one early effort to this end deserves mention. For several centuries marl was used extensively as a fertiliser in many counties. Traces of its origin are still to be seen in the very numerous " pits " [2] with which the fields of Cheshire are studded. The number of these pools caused Leland to speculate on their origin. " Sum," he says, " be lykelyhood have begon of marle pittes. For the sandy ground of sum partes . . . especially of Chestreshire and Lancastreshire wille not bere corne plentifully but it be merlyd." [3] And in another place he returns to the same topic: " The chefe occasion, and the original by likelihod of the manifold poolys and lakes in Chestreshire was by digginge of marle for fattynge the baren grownd there to beare good corne . . ." [4] A Tudor edition of Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry* bears witness as follows: " Also in Cheshiere . . . they use for manure a kind of blewe marble-like earth which they call Marle. This is for those Countries an excellent manure, and though it be exceeding chargeable, yet through good neighbour-hood it quiteth the cost; for if you manure your groundes once in seaven or twelve yeares it is sufficient, and look how many yeares he bearethe Corne, so many he will beare grasse, and that plenty." [5]

But the practice of marling is, of course, far older than Leland and Fitzherbert. Higden noted [6] it and it was fairly widespread in England in the fourteenth century.[7] It is probable, however, that it was employed in Cheshire at a rather earlier date,[8] and more commonly than in most other counties. A marlpit near Chester is mentioned as

[1] *Vide infra*, 134-135.

[2] *Marlpits:* Since marlpits usually fill with water, they resemble pools and ponds, and indeed the terms " pit," " pool " and " pond " are used in Cheshire without much discrimination. The following marks of a marlpit may, however, be noted: (*a*) it may be quite unrelated to drainage lines (whereas pools or ponds lie in natural depressions); (*b*) the bank is usually steep at one end and gently shelved at the other, in order that loaded carts may be drawn out; (*c*) two or three sheets of water closely adjoining, or merged into one, often indicate marlpits. The marl has been dug out from one pit in one year, and when marling-time arrived in the next year, the pit has been filled with water, and it was necessary to start digging afresh.

[3] Leland, IV, 2.

[4] Ibid., V, 6.

[5] Fitzherbert, *Book of Husbandry* (ed. Skeat—English Dialect Society), 134. The editor explains (introd. xxvi) that this passage was added by " I.R."

[6] " a kind of erthe whom men call marle," *Polychronicon*, II, 14, and *vide infra*, 23.

[7] Cf. *Cal. Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 4474 and c. 4905 (Sussex), c. 5007 (Kent), c. 6232 (Salop), c. 6224 (Staffs).

[8] On the Berkeley estates it was first used in 1240, but the cost was excessive. Prothero, *English Farming Past and Present*, 10. The earliest reference given by Thorold Rogers is 1271. *Hist. Agriculture*, II, 454-455.

early as 23 Henry III,[1] and marling was common in Cheshire in the latter half of the thirteenth century.

It is in the western rather than the eastern part of the county that the practice was most widespread, but the geological formation of the region is such that marl may be found in many districts. The "Forest Proceedings" of the period reveal a scene of strenuous activity in Wirral where scores of marlpits were dug in the reign of Edward I alone. At each regard of the forests, the digging of numbers of new pits is reported. One man "has newly tilled two acres and made a marlpit towards Burnhull."[2] At Backford, "the abbot of Stanlaw, Adam of Backford, and others have made two marlpits in the waste and three others, half in the waste and half in the cultivated area.[3] At Backford also, a marlpit has been made by the men of that place "which contains by estimation a quarter of an acre."[4] The men of Willaston "have made thirteen marlpits in Willaston, seven of which are dangerous."[5] The abbot of Chester "has brought into cultivation fifteen acres of waste in Lee and made eight marlpits";[6] and so on. In short, reclamation and fertilisation are proceeding concurrently, and the latter is being effected by individuals, by communities, by a great monastic corporation.

The forward policy of this corporation has already been mentioned. The abbots, who widened the bounds of their estates so continuously, used marl on a large scale. In the regard of 16 Edward I, abbot Simon is found to have made a marlpit in Irby, two at Plumyards and two large ones at Bromborough heath since the last regard was held.[7] In that of 22 Edward I the abbot has made a pit at Capenhurst.[8] When the pleas of the forest were held in 24 Edward I, a long list of marlpits totalling over seventy was presented in respect of the abbatial estates in Wirral. Some of these are the same as those already mentioned. Others had been made in Eastham, Sutton, Childer Thornton and Whitby. The abbot stated that these approvements had been made during the abbacy of his predecessor (viz., Simon of Whitchurch) and on inquiry it was found that the abbot had not exceeded his rights.[9] The process was continued by his successors, and in 21 Edward III the abbot was in mercy for making thirty-five marlpits in Greasby and sixty-five in Irby.[10] Here he had exceeded his rights. A fine was made

[1] In an inspeximus and confirmation of a charter relating to the bounds of Chester. *C. Chart. R.*, V (1341-1417), 258-259. This is the earliest reference I have found.

[2] "Forest Proceedings"—Chester, 33/3, m. 4.

[3] Ibid., No. 1, m. 11. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid., No. 2, m. 2, *in dorso*.

[6] Ibid., No. 3, m. 4. A large number of marlpits are mentioned in this roll; and a number of others in Roll No. 4, m. 12.

[7] Ibid., No. 1, m. 12. [8] Ibid., No. 1, m. 11.

[9] "Harl." MS. 2149/118 (128).

[10] "Forest Proceedings"—Chester, 33/4, m. 13.

and paid,[1] and in 1353 he was pardoned for making more marlpits in the forests.[2]

The value of marling, therefore, was widely appreciated, and clauses relating to its excavation began to be inserted in deeds relating to land. Sir Thomas Danyers, for example, in giving up to a neighbour his rights in the commons of Bradley expressly excepts the privilege of getting marl from the commons ;[3] Peter de Dutton in making small grants of land in Houghs Wood and Hulle expressly mentions the grantee's right to have marl ;[4] and William de Lawton in granting to the abbot of Chester a part of the waste below Lawton Chapel gave permission to take marl in his demesne land.[5]

It is unfortunate that the records of the period throw no light on the cost or process of marling in Cheshire. Thorold Rogers collected statistics from the Midlands and south of England, which point to an average cost of 3s. to 4s. per hundred loads, and since the cost of dressing an acre was about the same, he inferred that about a hundred loads of marl were spread to the acre.[6] At these rates the process was laborious and costly, but the results were both beneficial and lasting. As Higden said, when it is "caste in to the feldes," it "causethe grete plenteousnesse of corne,"[7] and the dressing was not repeated for perhaps a dozen years.

The location of some of these marlpits is interesting. The material was heavy and the first consideration was to shorten the distance for haulage. Where marl was abundant there was a tendency to multiply the number of pits to the danger of human beings or the beasts of the forest. Occasionally, therefore, the "Forest Rolls" point to the filling up of pits. In the instance already quoted at Willaston, where seven pits were said to be dangerous, the men of that vill were in mercy and had to fill up the pits at their own cost.[8]

There is another noteworthy feature. Once excavated, a pit tends to fill with water and remain a permanently fixed mark in the landscape. This quality of permanence renders it a convenient point of reference. Further, the pit is dug, not in the cultivated land near the village, but in the waste, where well-defined permanent marks are few.[9] Moreover, the pit is independent of any water course. In short, an out

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 170. [2] *Recog. Rolls*, 514.
[3] *Arley Charters*, XXXI and 27 (date 1335).
[4] *Ibid.*, 26 (two instances : one in the middle of the thirteenth century, the other undated). [5] *Chester Chartulary*, II, 440 (date 1265-1291).
[6] *Hist. Agriculture*, I, 286. See also *ibid.*, II, 454-455.
[7] *Polychronicon*, II, 14.
[8] "Forest Proceedings"—Chester, 33/2, m. 2, *in dorso*. Another example occurs in Roll, i, m. 12. The surface is defaced and the name illegible, but it is clear that the pit must be filled—"obstupari oportet."
[9] A Staffordshire deed refers to the right to "take marl from the common marlpit in Nomanneslondes." *Cal. Ancient Deeds*, VI, x, 6224.

of the way marlpit may attain importance as a landmark years after it has ceased to be a source of marl. When the way from Northwich to Frodsham was perambulated in 21 Edward III, it was defined as passing, in one place, "through the middle of the waste to a lane by a certain marlpit . . ."[1] The bounds of the liberties of Chester passed along a "ditch near a certain marlpit,"[2] while the bounds of Rudheath include no less than five marlpits ;[3] and occasionally the position of land was defined by reference to a marlpit.[4]

The cultivation of new land, the draining of marshes and the extensive use of marl combined to increase the produce of the county and render possible the support of an increasing population. In agricultural development, the region was backward, but it was not unfertile, nor was the value of land low. Indeed, statistics tend to show that the value of land in Cheshire was higher than in neighbouring counties.[5] But the very nature of the figures renders accurate comparison between counties impossible, and even for the county of Cheshire itself, it is not possible to make any broad generalisations. Statements of value are not lacking, but it is necessary to make allowance for the circumstances under which they were drawn up. Inquisitions post mortem, inquisitions ad quod damnum, grants, manorial extents, compoti and rentrolls do not represent any single system of valuation. Further, many statements do not distinguish between arable land and pasture. Moreover, the units of measurement were variable, the size of the acre in particular being obscure.[6] Under the circumstances it is impossible to do more than quote a few examples drawn from different parts of the county. Meadow land was the most valuable but the valuable areas were very limited. The following examples may be given :—

Barrow[7]	7 acres at 4s. 0d. per acre	(Extent)
Weaverham[8]	1 acre ,, 3s. 4d. ,, ,,	(Extent)
Bradford[9]	3 acres ,, 2s. 2⅔d. ,, ,,	(Extent)
Halton[10]	10 ,, ,, 1s. 2d. ,, ,,	(Inquisition)
Halton[11]	10 ,, ,, 6d. ,, ,,	(Extent)

Of arable land, or land the nature of which is not stated, the following are examples :—

[1] *Calendar of Deeds*, etc., Deputy Keeper's Report (No. 28, Appendix 47).
[2] Morris (*Doc.*), 212, 499. [3] *V.R.L. Book*, 143-144.
[4] Cf. "One plot next le Marlepittes." *Ibid.*, 92.
[5] It is obvious that comparisons of this kind cannot be regarded as more than superficial. The tables given below may be compared with a table in *V.C.H. Derbyshire*, II, 175-176.
[6] See Appendix G, 187. [7] Ormerod, II, 330. [8] *V.R.L. Book*, 63.
[9] *Ibid.*, 63. [10] Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 47.
[11] "Harl." MS. 2115/109.

Frodsham [1]	84 acres at	2s. od. per acre	(Ministers' Account)
Kelsall [2]	3 ,, ,,	2s. od. ,, ,,	,,
,, [3]	5 ,, ,,	2s. od. ,, ,,	,,
Whitley [4]	18 ,, ,,	1s. 6½d. ,, ,,	,,
Barrow [5]	25 ,, ,,	1s. 6d. ,, ,,	(Extent)
Halton [6]	115 ,, ,,	1s. od. ,, ,,	(Compotus)
Great Meols [7]	20 ,, ,,	1s. od. ,, ,,	(Inquisition)
Congleton [8]	"each acre"	1s. od. ,, ,,	(Charter)
Shotwick [9]	90 acres ,,	1s. od. ,, ,,	(Rent roll)
Over [10] / Weaverham [10]	scores of small areas ,,	1s. od. ,, ,,	,,
Halton [11]	65½ acres ,,	8d. ,, ,,	(Inquisition)

Newly assarted land was, of course, rented as a rule at a low figure, the area in many instances not being stated.[12] In the forests of Macclesfield, however, many small assarts were rented at 8d. an acre and some at 6d.[13] while on the Vale Royal estates there were some rented at 1s. an acre [14] (the same rent as the greater part of the estates).

Finally, in some instances, land designated as waste was rented. For example :—

Weaverham [15]	24 acres (18 years lease) at	1s. od. per acre.
Weaverham [16]	19 ,, (24 ,, ,,	,, 1s. 6d. ,, ,,
Frodsham [17]	5¾ ,,	,, 1s. 6d. ,, ,,

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/2.
[2] Ibid., 801/16, m. 2, *in dorso.*
[3] Ibid., 801/16, m. 2, *in dorso.*
[4] Ibid., 801/16, m. 1.
[5] Ormerod, II, 340.
[6] *De Lacy Compoti*, 142.
[7] Ormerod, II, 495.
[8] Ibid., III, 36.
[9] Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, Appendix 59.
[10] *V.R.L. Book*, 92-112.
[11] Beamont, *op. cit.*, 47.
[12] *V.R.L. Book*, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97.
[13] "Assize Rolls"—Chester, 17/12, m. 2.
[14] *V.R.L. Book*, 109, 112.
[15] *Ibid.*, 111.
[16] *Ibid.*, 111.
[17] *Recog. Rolls*, 473.

CHAPTER III.

AGRICULTURE.

THE development of the agricultural resources of the county lay in the hands of a number of lords, the more important of whom must be mentioned,[1] before we consider the larger aspects of agriculture.

The estates of the earl of Chester were considerable, but they were not the greatest in the county. Darnhall, Over, Weaverham and Frodsham, four valuable manors on the left bank of the Weaver, had belonged to the earldom since the Conquest. The first three were given to the new abbey of Vale Royal, while Frodsham was held for a short period by David, brother of Llewellyn,[2] Prince of Wales, but escheated in 1283 and remained in the earl's possession throughout our period. The manor of Drakelowe near Rudheath and the manor of Shotwick also belonged to the earl, while the manor of Macclesfield was granted to Queen Isabella in 1318,[3] regranted to her for life in 1327,[4] then became the property of the Black Prince,[5] and passed to his widow in 1376.[6]

More extensive were the estates of the Lacies (earls of Lincoln, constables of Chester and barons of Halton) which passed in 1310 to Thomas, earl of Lancaster, and in 1361 to John of Gaunt who had married the heiress of Henry, duke of Lancaster. The Cheshire manors were, of course, only a part of the lands which belonged to the duchy of Lancaster.[7] Their annual value was estimated at £312 11s. 5½d. in 1361,[8] and they included Halton, Runcorn, Moore, Whitley, Congleton, Kelsall and Bidston.[9]

[1] No attempt is made here to draw up a complete list of families and possessions. It is merely necessary to mention such names as shall render the remainder of the work intelligible. Genealogies and descents of manors are treated in detail in Ormerod's *Cheshire, passim.*

[2] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 279.

[3] *Ibid.* (1317-1321), 203.

[4] *Ibid.* (1327-1330), 66-68.

[5] For a statement of the value of the manor at the time the Black Prince received it, see "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 49.

[6] *C.P.R.* (1374-1377), 374.

[7] For a brief sketch of the estates of John of Gaunt, see S. Armitage-Smith, *John of Gaunt* (London, 1904), 196-229.

[8] *C.F.R.* (1356-1368), 164. In this figure is included the value of Widnes in Lancashire which is usually grouped in the "Ministers' Accounts," with the Cheshire Manors.

[9] For further details see Ormerod, I, 703-704, and Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 56.

Both the Black Prince and John of Gaunt, therefore, were lords of estates in Cheshire, but most of the other lords were men of much less exalted rank. By the fourteenth century, several of the baronies created in the Norman period had been, or were being, broken up. The Halton barony, as we have seen, was absorbed in the duchy of Lancaster, but the baronies of Nantwich and Malpas had already been divided into various parts; the baronies of Shipbrook and Dunham Massey remained till the fourteenth century when the breaking up began; the barony of Kinderton had long since lost its unity by subinfeudation.

The result was that the land was for the most part held by lords whose estates were considerable enough to give them local importance, but narrow enough to confine their interests to the county. A few manors such as Tarvin,[1] Eaton and Rushton,[2] were held by magnates with estates outside the county, but the typical lords in the fourteenth century—the Duttons, the Warburtons, the Grosvenors, the Mainwarings, the Fittons, the Egertons, the Delves, the Fouleshursts—are lords of one manor, or at the most two. In time of war, they are absent in France for long periods and rank among the most noteworthy warriors of their day. In times of peace they reside at their manors and turn their energies to the development of their lands.

Monastic estates in the county were extensive. The abbey of St. Werburgh at Chester, the oldest and largest of the religious houses, was also the most wealthy. Prior to the compilation of Domesday Book, it held the following manors :—Saighton, Cheveley, Huntington, Great Boughton, Iddinshall, Wervin, Croughton, Wisdelea, Sutton (Little and probably Great), Saughall, Shotwick, Neston, Raby, Bridge Trafford, Ince, Clifton, Pulford, Lache, as well as certain lands in Flintshire. To this nucleus was added in the succeeding centuries a large number of donations of lands and mills as well as various rights and immunities, and certain houses in the city, and saltpans in the Wiches. Among the larger grants were the manors of Eastham, Goosetrey, Lawton and Upton,[3] and there were certain manors in other counties.[4] In the neighbourhood of Chester the abbatial estates almost formed a ring around the city.

The estates of Combermere abbey [5] were neither so extensive nor

[1] Tarvin belonged to the Bishop of Lichfield.

[2] Eaton (by Tarporley) and Rushton belonged to the Greys of Ruthin.

[3] The estates of St. Werburgh's abbey are set out in detail in the *Chartulary of Chester Abbey;* Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, II; *Domesday Survey of Cheshire;* "Rentals and Surveys," *P.R.O. Roll*, 893 (Temp. Elizabeth); "Harl." MS. 1965, Registrum Sanctae Werburgae (a summary).

[4] E.g., the great manor of Weston in Derbyshire, and manors in Anglesey (for a short period) and Flint.

[5] The estates of Combermere abbey are to be found in: *Dugdale*, V, 321-327; *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (Record Commission), 258; *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (Record Commission), V, 216-217; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire* (12 vols., London, 1854-1860), esp. Vol. IX.

so scattered as those of the abbey of St. Werburgh. Combermere lies almost on the boundary which divided Salop from the earldom of Chester. Its possessions lay on both sides of the boundary and formed a compact area of two or three square miles in South Cheshire with a number of smaller areas in North Salop. On the Cheshire side lay the manors of Chesthull and Hull, the manor of Wilkesley and the vills of Royal and Lodmore and the land of Burley, while the most important possession south of the boundary was the manor of Drayton acquired by purchase from the monastery of St. Evroult.[1] This abbey had also a fourth part of Nantwich.[2]

Norton priory drew much of its revenue from churches, several of which lay outside the earldom. It had, however, temporal possessions in Runcorn, in Norton and in Stanney adjoining the lands of the abbot of Stanlawe.[3]

The estates of Vale Royal abbey lay chiefly along the west bank of the Weaver and consisted of the very large manor of Weaverham, the manors of Darnhall, Over and Conewardsley, with lands in Moresbarrow and Twemlow. It had also some smaller outlying property and the manor of Gayton (in Wirral) which was subsequently exchanged for Marton near the abbey.[4]

The Cheshire estates of the remaining religious houses were less considerable. The priory of St. Mary (Chester) had land at Walrescot in Delamere forest.[5] The monks of Birkenhead priory had lands in Wirral,[6] and the monks of Stanlawe abbey had the vills of Stanney and Aston.[7]

By no means all of the lands indicated were cultivated or managed by the proprietors mentioned. Large areas of the estates, both of lay lords and ecclesiastics, were let to lesser men, and in some instances wealthy lay lords were tenants of the monasteries. A large part of the great manor of Weaverham, for example, was held by lay lords who did homage to the abbot of Vale Royal for their respective tenements: the Grosvenors for Lostock, the Swettenhams for Swettenham, and the Duttons for six oxgangs of land in Dutton.[8]

The remaining portions of the estates were managed by the lords or by their ministers and the greater estates—those of the earl of Chester

[1] Lee. *History of Market Drayton* (London, 1861), 17, 18.
[2] *Vide infra*, 109. [3] Dugdale, *Monasticon*, V, 628.
[4] *Ibid.*, VI, 709; *V.R.L. Book*, 129-133; *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 258; *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, V, 208-209.
[5] *Calendar of Deeds*, etc.—*Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVII, Appendix 96.
[6] Some of the possessions of Birkenhead priory are recorded in Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, IV, 239-243; *Calendar of Deeds*, etc.—*Deputy Keeper's Reports*, XXVI, 52; XXVII, 100; XXVIII, 29, 44; *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, V, 212.
[7] The Chartulary of Stanlawe abbey is printed in the *Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey*, ed. Hulton, 4 vols. (C.S.). The temporalities are summarised in *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, V, 227-230. [8] *V.R.L. Book*, 58, 61-62, 114-115.

and the duke of Lancaster—came within the purview of the councils of the two princes. The larger problems of estate management in these instances, therefore, were transferred to a distant body. It would, however, be erroneous to infer that the system of conciliar management was less competent than a purely local management would have been. Delays there may have been, and in some instances bad judgment, but the bodies in question were dealing with the whole of their respective lord's estates, and could bring to the consideration of local problems both wide experience and an intimate knowledge of their lord's immediate needs. Moreover, members of the earl's council were regularly and frequently in the earldom on business of a financial or judicial nature and were, therefore, closely in touch with local conditions.

The most detailed evidence of the system by which the Black Prince and his council directed the administration of the Cheshire estates is found in the despatches which passed from the council to the justice and chamberlain. From Chester went long letters dealing with a wide range of local affairs and containing requests for instruction on as many as thirty or forty different points [1] at a time. These queries were dealt with by the council seriatim, and the replies [2] are in most instances explicit, detailed, and suggestive of vigour and thoroughness. If a more cautious note appears, it is only in order that the prince may profit. If a measure of discretion is allowed to the chamberlain, its purpose and limits are defined. The dominant consideration was the maintenance of a large and steady revenue. Repairs were to be effected as they occurred, the marshes were to be drained, barns were to be built and stock bought, but (as an instruction of 1351 ran) " the chamberlain is to make easy payment from time to time out of the issues of his office . . . so that the prince be not hindered of his moneys by any large sum being paid at a time or within a short period." [3] To the chamberlain, therefore, fell a certain controlling power. The various ministers' accounts were rendered to him in the first instance, and it was he who supplied sums for stock and buildings. We shall see later that he also directed the transfer of stock from one manor to another,[4] his intention probably being to make use of the various advantages offered by the different manors.

Concerning the administration of the Cheshire estates of the earldom (and later duchy) of Lancaster evidence is less detailed. In the

[1] They are, of course, not confined to estate management, but include many sides of local administration. I am not sure whether the original letters exist, but since the replies (" T.R. Book," 279) are framed to deal with them point by point, the nature of the originals may be inferred.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., fol. 12, article 22. The whole of the " T.R. Book," 279 (in MS. calendar at the *P.R.O.*) is a most valuable source both for administrative and for economic history. Since I have used it freely in other chapters, pp. 16-17, 92, 150, etc., I have not thought it necessary to illustrate its value more fully here.

[4] *Vide infra*, 51-52.

late thirteenth and early fourteenth century they were managed by stewards, bailiffs and other ministers, as may be seen in the *De Lacy Compoti*.[1] After John of Gaunt's succession to the duchy, they came under the supervision of his council. They formed but a small fraction of the Lancastrian estates and it is not possible to trace the system of management in the same detail as we traced that employed by the Black Prince. Nevertheless the framework of the system is clearly revealed in the "Register of John of Gaunt"[2] and further details may be added from the "Ministers' Accounts." The great Lancastrian estates were divided into three groups, the Cheshire estates falling in the northern group which comprised also lands lying in the counties of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northumberland. Over the whole of the estates the council of John of Gaunt maintained a general supervision, but it also employed a chief seneschal for each group. In the northern counties this office was held by William Nesfeld, a highly paid minister, who was allowed to reside at Knaresborough Castle. Nesfeld's duties differed widely from those of the justice and chamberlain of Chester. The estates under his charge were much greater and much more widely scattered. On the other hand, he appears to have had no judicial or political responsibilities. He received instructions from the Savoy, but the council also communicated directly with the bailiffs or officials of the Cheshire manors. A handsome travelling allowance[3] encouraged him to move about the estates, and "Ministers' Accounts" show that he was not idle. It was he who let the windmill at Runcorn to John the bailiff;[4] and it was he who fixed the rent of newly approved land in Ashwood (Whitley)[5] and it was he who caused the oak trees at Norwood and at Ashwood to be numbered.[6]

The portions of the monastic estates retained by the monks for their own use were managed by various officials, but contemporary records throw very little light on their activities. Monastic granges were fairly numerous. Those of the abbot of Chester were at Saighton, Sutton, Ince, Eastham, Bromborough and Irby.[7] The prior of Birkenhead had a grange in the forest of Wirral.[8] The abbot of Combermere had granges at Acton and Burland in Cheshire;[9] he worked the lands near his monastery, and had two granges in Salop near (Market) Drayton.[10] The granges of Vale Royal abbey were at Darnhall (the original site of the abbey), Knights, Conwardsley, Bradford, Moresbarrow,

[1] *De Lacy Compoti* (ed. P. A. Lyons), C.S., CXII, 1884.
[2] *John of Gaunt's Register*, ed. S. Armitage Smith, 2 vols., Camden Society, 1911.
[3] *Ibid.*, Introd. xii-xiii.
[4] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[5] Ibid., 4/32.
[6] Ibid., *in dorso*, 4/32.
[7] *Chester Chartulary*, *passim*.
[8] *Calendar of Deeds*, etc., in *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVI, 52.
[9] *Ibid.*, 49. Both are near Nantwich.
[10] Cliffe Grange and Shifford's Grange. Lee, *History of Market Drayton*, 16.

Marton, Hefferston, on the west side of the Weaver ; at Twemlow near Rudheath ; and at Middleton north of Acton.[1]

Details of the management of these monastic farms are rather scanty. Probably the best indication of size and value is to be seen in a statement concerning the Vale Royal granges made before royal commissioners in 1336 :—[2]

	Yearly value.
Grange of Conwardsley—	
2 Carucates	30s.
Pastures	60s.
Rent of tenants	50s.
Grange of Bradford—	
3 Carucates	80s.
Pasture	20s.
Mill	53s. 4d.
Grange of Beaurepair or Knights—	
3 Carucates	80s.
Pasture	30s.
Grange of Marton—	
1 Carucate	12s. 4d.
Pasture	6s. 8d.
Rents of tenants	98s.
Grange of Twemlow—	
Rents and one mill	£9 8s.
Grange of Moresbarrow—	
2 Caracutes, A meadow and a small wood	40s.

Concerning the other religious houses, there is little statistical evidence, but in view of the magnitude of its estates and the fact that licences were issued for the crenellation of the halls at Saighton, Sutton and Ince,[3] it seems probable that the granges of St. Werburgh's Abbey (Chester) were greater than those of Vale Royal.[4]

We pass now to the agricultural economy. Having already touched upon the larger aspects of reclamation, fertility and the value of the land, we must now deal with its productions. In treating some aspects, we shall endeavour to make a general survey ; with others it will be desirable to treat certain manors at some length, rather than attempt to generalise from insufficient evidence.

[1] *V.R.L. Book, passim.* The modern Ordnance maps show a place called Earnslow Grange north-west of the site of the abbey, but there is no reference to this in the *V.R.L. Book*, or in *Valor Ecclesiasticus*. [2] *Ibid.*, 161-162.

[3] *Cheshire Sheaf* (1909), 91. See also Dugdale, II, 385.

[4] On the other hand, crenellation may have been merely a precautionary measure arising from the nearness of Saighton to the Welsh border.

Since the climate of Cheshire is not wholly suited to the production of corn, and since considerable tracts of the county were ill adapted for arable cultivation, dependence on local supplies necessitated the tilling of a disproportionate area for the raising of the necessary supply of corn. Wheat, barley, oats, rye were grown, and ploughing and harrowing appear, of course, among the "autumn costs" in the bailiff's accounts, with numerous details of repairs to plough-shares and the shoeing of horses (and sometimes of oxen).[1] Seed might be drawn from the previous year's crops or purchased from a distance. The bailiff of Drakelowe was supplied with wheat for seed bought in Chester, and barley, beans and peas were purchased for seed for the same manor.[2] Occasionally the fields sown are indicated [3] and in some instances the quantity of seed sown to the acre is stated. At Frodsham, for example, in 1350, the bailiff purchased 10 quarters 6 bushels 2 pecks of wheat by "rased measure" for 21½ acres, calculating at 4 bushels to the acre. To this he added 1 quarter 2 bushels 3 pecks "for heaping up," thus allowing (roughly) an additional 2 pecks per acre.[4] Hoeing is frequently mentioned,[5] and concerning harvesting there are copious details.

Mowing and reaping, with the accompanying work of gathering, carting and stacking, were carried out in part by the labour services of the tenants, but on various manors such services were commuted,[6] and paid labour on a large scale was employed. Probably some of the harvesters were migratory, and "Eyre Rolls" and "Indictment Rolls" show that many of the offenders under the Statute of Labourers were mowers who left their own locality.[7] A few details of hay harvests occur in some of the "Ministers' Accounts." Probably the most vivid is in a bailiff's account of the manor of Frodsham for the year 8-9 Edward II.[8] A large area of the low-lying and only half-drained meadow land of Frodsham marsh was reserved for hay—more indeed this year than in the preceding year, for the flooding of meadows had decreased the number of applicants for such lands till nobody desired them and the bailiff had the crops mown for the earl.[9] This year a total area of 71½ acres and half a rood (in various fields) was mown at a cost of 1s. 1d. an acre. The hay was then tossed and made, the expense being 4d. an acre and the crop from 32 acres was gathered. Six carts, hired for

[1] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102; *Chamber. Accts.*, 191, 196; "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12, 784/11, m. 7. [2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 198.

[3] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102. The MS. is at Eaton Hall (by Chester), but the manor is that of Eaton by Tarporley. [4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 193.

[5] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102; "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12; *Chamber. Accts.*, 192.

[6] A distinction is drawn between *opera messionis ad cibum* and *opera messionis sine cibo*, the former being commuted for 1d., and the latter for 2d. "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24. [7] *Exivit a patria. Vide infra*, 149.

[8] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12. This is one of the best rolls I have seen. The details are copious, the writing clear and the parchment excellently preserved.

[9] An aggregate of more than 46 acres are accounted for thus.

three days at a cost of 4d. per day per cart, were used in carrying the hay from the great meadow to a stack at le Bothemote, and twenty-two men were at work for three days carting the hay and making the stack. Two carts were used in Holpul meadow for the same period and five men made a stack there. The larger stack was thatched at a cost of 2s., and the nature of the ground may be inferred from the fact that a great trench was dug round each of the stacks at a cost of 2d. a perch. As for the remainder of the hay mown and made, it was all carried away by a gentle rising of the waters.[1]

The corn harvest was, of course, the busiest time of the year, and efforts were generally made to shorten the duration of the work by employing large numbers of men. At Hawstead in Suffolk, for example, the grain crops of the manor were harvested in two days by employing 274 men on the first day and 269 on the second,[2] while on the estates of Bolton abbey several hundred men were engaged to reap for one day.[3] Such large numbers are not found in the accounts of Cheshire manors, but it is evident that an attempt was made to hasten the process by gathering many workers together. At Eaton, in 1372, as many as 70 men were used in mowing the lord's wheat at a "love bone." For these men the lord provided bread, cheese, beef and ale, while on another day, when 64 tenants performed their "bederepe," food and drink were again provided.[4] At Eaton, as in other parts of England, the work was finished speedily, but such a scene of organised and successful effort must be contrasted with the picture sketched of the harvest at Frodsham in 1316. Here, in one of the worst years of the fourteenth century, though the number of harvesters rose as high as 58 and averaged 40, the work dragged on for five weeks. The details given in the bailiff's account[5] illustrate the long-drawn-out process (see p. 34).

Such a lengthy harvesting was probably unusual and the crops, when gathered, unusually poor. The normal crop, however, was probably not of a high order. The region was too moist for profitable corn production. It seldom exported grain,[6] and in all periods of stress it turned to Ireland for supplies.[7]

[1] 1316 was one of a series of very bad years with "cold, rain, flood, famine and pestilence" (Tout, *Edward II*, 237), but the costly ditching operations (*vide supra*) and the fact that crops from various small areas at Frodsham were again carried away by floods in 1351 (*Chamber. Accts.*, 188) indicate the general nature of the district.

[2] Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present* (3rd edn.), 11. Cf. also Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*, 283, 284.

[3] Whittaker, *History of Craven* (London, 1805), 336.

[4] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102.

[5] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.

[6] A rare instance of exportation of grain occurs in "Assize Rolls"—Chester, 25/4, m. 17, where an inquisition at Frodsham in 39 Edward III showed that several men (named) had used their boats (also named) to take grain from Cheshire to Furness in Lancashire.

[7] *Vide infra*, 79-83, 134.

REAPING ON FRODSHAM MARSH, 1316.

Date.	Number of Harvesters.	Day's Wage.	£	s.	d.
Wed. 27 August	46	1½d.	0	11	6
Thurs. 28 ,,	46	1½d.			
Sat. 30 ,,	20	1d. (half day)	0	1	8
Mon. 1 Sept.	58 (54 + 4)	1½d. / 1d.	0	7	1
Tues. 2 ,,	58	1d.[1]	0	4	10
Wed. 3 ,, / Thurs. 4 ,, / Fri. 5 ,,	58 (56 + 2)	1½d / 1d.	1	1	6
Sat. 6 ,,	42	1d. (half day)	0	3	6
Mon. 8 ,,	29	1½d.	0	3	7½
Fri. 12 ,,	34	1½d.	0	4	3
Mon. 15 ,,	30	1½d.	0	3	9
Tues. 16 ,,	36	1½d.	0	4	6
Thurs. 18 ,,	30	1½d.	0	3	9
Fri. 19 ,,	37	1½d.	0	4	7½
Sat. 20 ,,	30	1d. (half day)	0	2	6
Mon. 22 ,,	38 (34 + 4)	1d. / 1½d.	0	3	4
Tues. 23 ,,	29	1½d.	0	3	7½
Wed. 24 ,,	47	1½d.	0	5	10½
Thurs. 25 ,,	28	1½d.	0	3	6
Sat. 27 ,,	21	1d. (half day)	0	1	9
And one man following the harvesters from place to place for 34 days taking 2d. a day			0	5	8
			£5	4	8½
			(£5	0	1)[2]

But whether local supplies sufficed for local needs or not, corn-mills were, of course, necessary. Domesday only mentions about a score in Cheshire,[3] though others may have existed. By the fourteenth century water-mills were numerous, and windmills were becoming fairly common, examples being found at Runcorn,[4] Frodsham,[5] Ince,[6] Halton,[7]

[1] "And not more because of rain."

[2] The error in addition is perhaps due to the omission of one day's work on the account.

[3] A list of 23 which includes two in North Wales is given in Bennet and Elton, *History of Corn Milling*, II, 164.

[4] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.

[5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 124.

[6] *Whalley Abbey Coucher Book*, 509, 511.

[7] "Harl." MS. 2115/109; "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.

Whitley,[1] Macclesfield,[2] Great Meols,[3] Bulkeley,[4] and on the estates of the prior of Birkenhead.[5]

By far the most important mills in the county were the king's mills at Chester. In order to secure a suitable head of water, Earl Hugh Lupus had constructed a great causeway across the Dee, and then erected mills which were destined to rank among the most famous in the land.[6] Less important mills stood in almost every township. Their maintenance, their value and in some instances their location, figure prominently in contemporary records. Repairs are frequent and diverse.[7] Here a new shaft is obtained, the old one being sold for 12d.;[8] there new arms are made for the mill wheel;[9] in another place a great alder is used "for bringing water from the pond to the wheel";[10] in still another, the mill pond itself is repaired.[11] Flood or fire may damage a mill;[12] meadows may be flooded by water from the mill pond,[13] roads rendered impassable by the same cause,[14] and fisheries spoilt by the inability of the fish to pass the weirs.[15]

Such interference with roads and fisheries naturally drew attention not merely to the existence of a mill, but to its location, and in some instances provision was made in grants for the removal of a mill to a site where the overflow of the mill pool would not damage the public way.[16] The location of mills is again the subject of inquiry when they are built in the forests.[17]

Closely allied with the question of repairs and in many instances with location, was the provision of millstones. Since the red sandstone of Cheshire is too soft for grinding purposes, it must often have been necessary to seek supplies at some distance. Three pairs of stones were bought for Macclesfield mills in 1303[18] and a pair for Frodsham mill in 1312,[19] the place of origin not being stated, but the bailiff of Cogshall bought two pairs in 1352-1353 at Tintwistle,[20] and on several occasions the mills at Chester were fitted with stones obtained in Anglesey.[21]

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24, *in dorso*; 4/32. [2] Ormerod, III, 744.
[3] Ibid., II, 495. [4] Ibid., II, 649. [5] Ibid., II, 462.
[6] A chapter is devoted to these mills in *History of Corn Milling*, IV, 55-123.
[7] (Northwich) "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 2; (Congleton) "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[8] (Whitley) "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24; (Frodsham) "Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 4.
[9] (Congleton) "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3.
[10] (Frodsham) *Chamber. Accts.*, 82. [11] (Northwich) *ibid.*, 124.
[12] *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 303; *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1309), No. 28.
[13] *Cal. Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 6310; *V.R.L. Book*, 176.
[14] *Ibid.*, 176.
[15] *Ibid.*, 176; *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1219-1307), No. 1441.
[16] *Chester Chartulary*, 422.
[17] "Forest Rolls"—Chester, 33/1, m. 7; Cox, *Royal Forests of England*, 135; Morris, *Chester*, 125. [18] *Chamber. Accts.*, 44. [19] *Ibid.*, 82.
[20] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24, *in dorso*.
[21] *Chamber. Accts.*, 126, 167, 241.

Such stones were brought to Chester by water, the journey in some instances being broken in the Dee estuary for transfer of the cargo from a sea-going vessel to a river boat.[1] The expenses are interesting. In 1357-1358 the Chamberlain accounts [2] as follows :—

	£	s	d
Paid Quarriers for making 13 pairs of Millstones [3] in Anglesey for the Mills of Dee	6	10	0
Carriage of the said stones from the quarry to the port	0	19	6
Shipping them	0	2	2
Expenses of Thomas de Middleton being (engaged) about the carriage of the said stones for shipping them at divers times	0	6	8
Carriage of the said stones from Anglesey to Burton .	6	15	8
Carriage of 7 stones from Burton to Dee mills . .	0	8	0
Carriage of 5 pairs of millstones from the ship to dry land	0	0	5

In the later part of our period, when some of the mills were leased for short periods of years, the maintenance of the fabric and equipment was the subject of a written agreement. When Congleton mills were leased to three men for six years, it was agreed that the lord would provide wood and iron and the three farmers would find millstones.[4] At Halton the conditions were different. Here the mills were let for the same period, the farmer maintaining them in everything except heavy timber and millstones.[5]

The rate of toll taken for grinding corn varied from mill to mill. At Altrincham it was one-eighteenth ;[6] at Congleton,[7] at Knutsford [8] and at Macclesfield,[9] it was one-twentieth. These rates were fixed (or confirmed) by charters of the second half of the thirteenth century. Earlier charters had, however, allowed a heavier toll. At Stockport [10] it was one-sixteenth, and in the great mills at Chester [11] it was one-sixteenth. Whatever the rate might be,[12] it is evident that the practice of taking multure in grain [13] allowed scope for dishonesty or extortion

[1] *Vide infra*, 141-143. [2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241.

[3] The price of these stones and of three pairs bought in 1350-1351 (*Chamber. Accts.*, 167) is low. The two pairs bought by the bailiff of Cogshall (*vide supra*, 35) cost 42s. Bennett and Elton state that in the period 1259-1400 there were extreme variations in price, but " a fair average for a single stone . . . seems to be about 20s." *History of Corn Milling*, III, 98.

[4] " Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.

[5] Ibid. Both Congleton and Halton belonged to the Duke of Lancaster. The account is for 45-46 Edward III.

[6] Ormerod, I, 536.

[7] Ibid., III, 36. [8] Ibid., I, 489. [9] Ibid., III, 740, n.

[10] Ibid., III, 790-791, n. [11] Morris (*Doc.*), 101.

[12] " The average toll throughout the kingdom from the 12th to the 15th century was the sixteenth part of the grain." *History of Corn Milling*, III, 154.

[13] The reeve of Eaton (by Tarporley) had quantities of wheat, peas, beans and draget ground at a cash price of 4d. a quarter in 1372. " Eaton " MS., Edward III/101-102.

on the part of the miller. It was against such malpractices that the citizens of Chester uttered a strong complaint in 1351. The millers, they stated, had levied evil customs and kept measures which were not fairly or reasonably made. The justice was ordered to investigate the customs, amend any false measures and mark the corrected measures with the mark of the prince's " tillerie." [1] Opposition on other grounds appears in the efforts of tenants to be free from the obligation to grind at their lord's mills.[2]

But whether toll was taken honestly or dishonestly, it is clear that some of these mills proved lucrative sources of income. They were seldom let to farm for more than short periods,[3] and it is rare to find statements of annual value for several consecutive years. The quality of the harvest, the number of men who brought corn to grind, the amount of repairs necessary—these varied from year to year. There were fluctuations in value, therefore, and although sources are seldom sufficiently abundant to afford details of yearly variations, a fairly good idea of annual value may be gained from a few examples. It is necessary to distinguish between at least three classes of statement. The " issues of the mill " form one class ; the " farm " or " rent " of mills form a second ; while a third class consists of statements of value embodied in " extents " or other documents.

A. Issues of Mills.

		Date.[4]	
Northwich	£5 15 1½	23-24 Edward III	[5]
,,	8 10 9½	24-25 ,,	[6]
,,	5 15 6½	27-28 ,,	[7]
,,	13 11 8	31-32 ,,	[8]
,,	13 11 6	42-43 ,,	[9]

[1] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 46. In " Harl." 2083/517 there is a translation of a complaint against the Dee millers in 10 Richard II.

[2] " Harl." MS. 2071/94*e* (men of the abbot of Chester residing outside the Northgate of Chester had to grind at the Bache mill) ; " Ministers' Accounts," 4/24 (men of Salghon and of Morton made a payment that they might grind corn wherever they wished) ; *V.R.L. Book*, 31.

[3] For example : Frodsham mill for three years—" Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 4 ; Halton mills and Congleton mills for six years—" Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.

[4] The period is usually from Michaelmas to Michaelmas.

[5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 144. The mill had " stood in needs of repair for half a year."

[6] *Ibid.*, 182.

[7] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/110. The mill had undergone repairs, William Scot, a carpenter, working four weeks at 20d. a week, and his son three weeks and two days at 16d. a week ; and there were a number of other expenses.

[8] " Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 2.

[9] Ibid., 786/10, m. 3.

B. Farm or Rent of Mills.

		Date.	
Kingsley	£0 12 0	27-28 Edward III	[1]
Whitley	1 4 0	23-24 Edward I	[2]
,, (Water)	1 0 0	45-46 Edward III	[3]
,, (Wind)	1 10 0	45-46 ,,	[4]
Runcorn	1 6 8	45-46 ,,	[5]
Helsby	2 13 4	27-28 ,,	[6]
Halton	2 13 4	45-46 ,,	[7]
Trafford	5 5 0	30-31 Edward I	[8]
Congleton	8 6 0	23-24 ,,	[9]
,,	8 0 0	24-25 ,,	[10]
,,	10 8 4	45-46 Edward III	[11]
Cogshall	10 0 0	25-26 ,,	[12]
Frodsham (2 mills)	40 0 0	8-9 Edward II	[13]
(1 mill)	11 0 0	24-25 Edward III	[14]
(1 mill)	16 0 0	42-43 ,,	[15]

C. Other Statements.

Darnhall	£11 13 4	Extent 1291.[16]
,,	12 0 0	Statement 1336.[17]
Weaverham	6 13 4	Extent 1291.[17]
,,	6 12 4	Statement 1336.[17]
Twemlow	9 8 0	,, 1336.[17]
Bradford	2 13 4	,, 1336.[17]

Much more valuable were the Dee mills at Chester. Standing beside the bridge which carried the great highway from England towards North Wales, possessed of ample water power, and taking a high toll of corn, they were so remunerative that their farm was for many years by far the largest item in the earl's revenue. The conditions on which they were held illustrate the military importance of the city. In 1275 Master Richard the Engineer takes them over for five years; he is to

[1] "An early rental of Sir Peter Thornton" (*Cheshire Sheaf*, 1896), 62.
[2] *De Lacy Compoti* (C.S.), 144.
[3] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] "An early rental of Sir Peter Thornton," 62.
[7] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 33.
[9] *De Lacy Compoti*, 148-149.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[12] Ibid., 4/24.
[13] Ibid., 801/12.
[14] *Chamber. Accts.*, 189.
[15] "Minister's Accounts," 786/10, m. 4.
[16] *V.R.L. Book*, 64.
[17] *Ibid.*, 161-162. The statement is headed "Moot concerning the taxation of the rents of Vale Royal made before the commissioners of the King A.D. 1336," and is in the form of a letter to the abbot of Morimond.

keep both mills and causey in good condition, and has licence to take timber in Delamere forest by view of the foresters, and " if the mills are overthrown by war or by fire he shall not be bound to repair them." [1] This was before Edward I was formally at war with Llewellyn. In 1281 (between the wars), Master Richard's tenure is renewed for three years. With the mills, he takes the fishery " pertaining to the bridge." He is again responsible for the maintenance of the mills and causeway, " and if through war a garrison stay in Chester, and grind his corn without toll, or if the king do the like, the toll shall be allowed in his farm, and if the mills perish through war or by fire and he be blameless, he shall not be held to repair the same." [2] In 1284, Master Richard took over the mills on the same conditions for another twelve years,[3] and he was still farmer of the mills in 1301-1302 and 1302-1303.[4]

The practice of farming the mills and fishery together was continued in the fourteenth century. (The fishery was of small value in comparison with the mills.) The figures for the joint farm show a rising value till the year 1347-1348, after which there is a drop followed by a gradual rise. (See Table on p. 40.)

It remains to give some more detailed description of the working of these important mills. A compotus [5] is extant for the year 27-28 Edward III, when the mills were suffering from the depression in trade which began in 1349. Richard Mareschall, clerk, is keeper of the mills and the staff consists of the master, three valetti or yeomen (formerly there had been seven), three boys and two *pagetti* (apprentices). Each of these takes toll, and each pays farm to the earl, but the farms have declined, that of the *valetti*, for example, which before the pestilence (*ante mortalitatem*) was eight shillings each per annum, is now only four shillings.

The keeper answers for 72 quarters of corn received as issues of the mills for the year. This quantity he accounts for as follows :—

67 qrs. 1 bushel 1 peck have been sold at various prices ; 6 bushels are accounted for in small disposals (described) ; 4 qrs. 3 pecks are handed to John de Newark, the next keeper of the mills.

[1] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 105. [2] *Ibid.* (1272-1307), 153.

[3] *Ibid.* (1272-1307), 206. While Richard was in the king's service in Wales, heavy floods wrought serious damage to the mills, fishery and causey. *County Court Rolls* (C.S.), 151. [4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 1, 15.

[5] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/110. This account is on both sides of a membrane in a bundle of Ministers' Accounts belonging to the series catalogued at the Public Record Office as " Ministers' Accounts," 784, 785, 786. In his *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*, 101, Canon Morris printed a short extract from the foot of the account, describing the customs. He omitted, however, the whole of the figures for the year's working given above.

FARM OF THE MILLS AND FISHERY OF DEE BRIDGE.

Date.	Yearly Value.	Reference.
1275, for 5 years	£140 0 0	*Cal. Pat. Rolls* (1272-1281), 105.
1281, for 3 years	200 0 0	*Cal. Fine Rolls* (1272-1307), 153.
1284, for 12 years	200 0 0	*Ibid.* (1272-1307), 206.
1301-1302	200 0 0	*Cheshire Chamb. Accts.*, 1.
1302-1303	200 0 0	,, ,, 15.
1320	200 0 0	,, ,, 89.
1327-1328 (see footnote) [1]		,, ,, 104.
1341	210 0 0	*Recognizance Rolls*, 414.
1346, for 3 years	243 6 8	*Recognizance Rolls*, 363. *Cheshire Chamb. Accts.*, 119.
1349-1350	166 13 4	,, ,, 140.
1354-1355, not farmed :		
Issues of mills	169 3 1¼	,, ,, 221.
Issues of fishery	9 18 6¼	
1356, for 3 years.[2]	190 0 0	Morris, *Chester*, 104-105.
1359-1360	199 11 3	*Cheshire Chamb. Accts.*, 258.
1368-1369	240 0 0	"Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 2, *in dorso*.

His sales [3] are detailed thus :—

Qrs.	Bushs.	Pks.				
12	2	1	at 5s.	per qr.	. . .	£3 3 1½
30	2	1	,, 4s.	,,	. . .	6 2 6
14	0	1	,, 4s. 4d.	,,	. . .	3 1 2½
7	0	1	,, 5s. 4d.	,,	. . .	1 18 0
1	1	0	,, 6s.	,,	. . .	0 7 6
1	4	1	,, 6s. 8d.	,,	. . .	0 10 10
67	1	1				£15 3 2

[1] The accounts for 1326-27-28 are not for full years. Under "receipts" for 1327-1328 the Chamberlain refers to the farm of the mills and fishery as £300, but "does not answer" in his account because the instalments "are paid at Easter and St. Michael which do not fall within the time of this account." In view of the other values, it seems probable that the figure quoted (£300) is an error for £200.

[2] The *Chamber. Accts.* (232 and 245) give instalments only of the £190 for 1356-1357 and 1358-1359.

[3] There are several small errors of calculation in the following figures. I have repeated them.

Of flour he has had 18 quarters and 1 hopper, and he has sold it thus :—

Qrs.	Bushs.			£ s. d.
6	4 and 1 hopper	at 6s.	per qr. . .	£1 19 4
9	0	4s. 6d.	,, . .	2 0 7½
1	0	5s.	,, . .	0 5 0
1	4	6s. 8d.	,, . .	0 10 0
18	0 and 1 hopper			£4 14 11

The unmilled corn malt of issue amounts to 31 quarters 2 bushels 1 peck. Of this quantity, 3 quarters are passed to the new keeper, and the remainder has been sold as follows :—

Qrs.	Bushs.	Pks.		£ s. d.
0	3	0	at 10s. a qr. . . .	£0 7 6
27	3	1	at 8s. ,, . . .	11 3 0
28	2	1		£11 10 6

The issues of corn and barley malt are 14 quarters 3 bushels and 1 hopper. To the new keeper he has handed 4 quarters 1 peck, and the remainder has been sold thus :—

Qrs.	Bushs.	Pks.		£ s. d.
1	4	0	at 9s. 4d. a qr. . .	£0 13 0
3	4	0	,, 6s. 0d. ,, . .	1 1 0
5	4	1	and 1 hopper at 6s. 8d. a qr.	1 17 11
10	2	1	and 1 hopper	£3 12 11

And so he continues with the issues :—
Unmilled barley malt sold at 6s. to 6s. 8d. a quarter ; unmilled oat malt sold at 4s. to 5s. a quarter ; oat malt sold at 3s. 8d. to 4s. a quarter ; "Mulnedust" sold at 6s. 8d. a quarter ; "mixtilio"[1] sold at 3s. 4d. to 4s. 4d. a quarter ; "mixtilio" flour sold at 2s. 8d. to 4s. a quarter.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The general conditions of the county in so far as they affected the production of domestic animals, deserve a brief analysis. The fertility

[1] Wheat and rye mixed together—Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, 8.

of the soil, the moderation of the rainfall and the extensive pastures combined to make a region suitable for cattle, though less suitable for sheep. These fundamental conditions were qualified by the circumstances of the time. By the fourteenth century, flocks and herds in many parts of England were practically safe from the ravages of wolves [1] and wild boars. Along the borders of the Pennines, however, the danger was not yet wholly passed.[2] The *Chamberlains' Account* for 1302-1303 states that wolves had repeatedly attacked the deer in Macclesfield park, and the farmer of the manor had constructed a trap to catch them,[3] while in the following year four wolves were caught in Delamere Forest.[4]

A further element of importance lay in the fact that parts of the country were contiguous to Wales. It is difficult to arrive at any conclusion respecting the amount of cattle-raiding that took place in the march land during the years of strife which preceded the Edwardian settlement of Wales. There is no doubt that at times the Cestrians captured droves of Welsh cattle; indeed, toll was levied on such droves at the Bridgegate of Chester,[5] and it is probably safe to conclude that the Welsh retaliated when they had the opportunity. Lacking command of the bridges at Chester and Holt, they were constantly at a disadvantage, and it is likely that serious raids (by fords) were few. Nevertheless, it is difficult to account for the sparseness both of population and of cattle in the Dee Valley, except on the hypothesis that the region was held to be unsafe for habitation. Such an opinion, born of generations of experience, would persist for many years after actual safety had been attained, and account for the fewness of animals in a region affording good pastures.

On the other hand, the settlement of North Wales led to a very close connection between Cheshire and the new county of Flintshire. During the peace of the fourteenth century, Welsh cattle were still driven into Cheshire—not as booty, but as picked stock for the earl's manors.[6]

An equally important factor was the forests. We have already seen how the work of reclamation was governed, and in some instances hindered, by the customs and rules regulating the assarting of land in the forests.[7] The principle that the earl's rights in the forest must be maintained—or only released on receipt of a fine—influenced both directly and indirectly the maintenance of cattle. The tilling of new land was undertaken with a view to increasing the supply of food not

[1] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II, 17.

[2] For instances of wolves in Lancashire in our period, see *De Lacy Compoti*, 129, 135, 161, etc. Speight mentions rewards for slaying wolves in Wharfedale in 1306. *Upper Wharfedale* (London, 1900), 288.

[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 25. [4] *Ibid.*, 41. [5] Morris (*Doc.*), 557.

[6] *Vide infra*, 54. [7] *Vide supra*, 11-18.

only for men, but also for beasts, and the policy followed in the eyre of 1353 was as detrimental to the cattle as it was to their owners.

There were also more obvious aspects in which forest rights affected the owners of cattle. A staff of foresters, verderers, regarders, agisters were on the look-out for trespasses of any kind. The "escape" of a single animal to the earl's several pastures in the forest was noted and the owner had to pay a fine. The cultivator who enclosed an area of land might, wittingly or unwittingly, act to the detriment of the deer. His fence might be too big,[1] his hedge too high,[2] or his ditch too wide,[3] for wild animals to leap over. Trivial though such things may appear at first sight, they gave rise to vexatious interference. For escaping cattle the amercement was usually about 1d. a head, and the vigilance of the foresters is seen in the fact that as many as 2000 pennies might be collected from this source in a single year in Delamere Forest;[4] while for dogs not lawed, the fines might amount to £44 16s., and from fines for keeping greyhounds as much as £62 3s. 4d.[5] was raised. Finally the beasts of the forest were themselves a source of trouble. To afford them special protection, agistment in the forests might be suspended; or, on the other hand, their numbers and nature might be

[1] "Forest Rolls"—Chester, 33/1, m. 7. [2] Ibid., 33/1, m. 7.

[3] Ibid., 32/2, m. 3.; "T.R. Book," 279, fols. 15, item 36.

[4] Escapes.—Down to 1305-1306 the sums collected under this head are given separately in the *Chamber. Accts.*, 4, 18, 27-32, 39, 66, 77. For subsequent years, either the Chamberlain "does not answer" or the sum is grouped with pannage or other items (*ibid.*, 77, 91, 102, 112, 120, 148, 160, 201, 222, 246, 259). Some values for earlier years are found in *V.R.L. Book*, Appendix 193, 194, 195; see also *Recog. Rolls*, 140, where a recognizance for 20s. (an unusually large figure) is made for escapes of cattle in Delamere Forest; and see *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 128, regarding a complaint by the abbot of Vale Royal that amercements were inflicted on his tenants for straying cattle. Further instances are in *County Ct. Rolls* (C.S.),214, 227-228, 236.

[5] Expeditation.—The figures here given belong to the series of heavy fines made in 1349-1350 (*Chamber. Accts.*, 130-131. See also *ibid.*, 164, 168, 201, 263). They are the first and almost the only figures given under this heading in the *Chamber. Accts.*, and are not to be regarded as representative.

The question appears to have been raised in a petition to Earl Ranulf and rejected (see *Chester Chartulary*, I, 102 *et seq.*, sec. 17). An inquisition at Chester in 1275 found that "Abbots, priors, knights and freeholders who are lords of towns or moieties of towns were always wont to have their dogs unlawed." *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1219-1307), 297. Ormerod cites a claim by the lord of Poulton Lancelyn (*Cheshire*, II, 442) and a successful defence of the steward of the bishop of Lichfield, who was lord of the manor of Burton (*ibid.*, II, 554). A large number of presentments for having dogs not lawed occurs in "Forest Rolls"—Chester 33/1, m. 12; and specific instructions respecting lawing are found in a letter of the Black Prince to the foresters of Macclesfield in 1351, in which he states "no man in the forests shall keep greyhounds, running dogs or Court dogges unless they be lawed and such lawing is to be kept and presentment of the lawed dogs made by the forester before the justice in his regard every three years, except in the forest of Delamere . . . where this has not formerly been done," "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 24. There are complaints by the men of the forests respecting the lawing of their dogs in "T.R. Book," 279, fols. 40-45.

such that they wrought damage and destruction.[1] It was on the latter grounds that the people of Wirral petitioned Edward III to disafforest Wirral.[2] In these respects, the forests hindered cattle-raising. In one respect, however, they aided it. The forests contained large numbers of oak-trees, the acorns from which afforded food for large numbers of pigs.[3]

Finally, in the fourteenth century, the export of English wool was confined to certain ports, and though the list of ports varied from time to time, Chester was not included. Cheshire wool could only be shipped after a long land journey. The production of wool for the Flemish market could only be carried on, therefore, under a serious disadvantage.

To sum up, on the one hand we have the lingering traces of wolves, the dangers of the march-land, the restrictions and disadvantages of the forest areas and the remoteness of a wool-exporting port. None of these handicaps was peculiar to Cheshire, but there were few counties in which they all operated simultaneously. On the other hand, we have the fertility of well-watered pastures, and a great abundance of acorns. The resultant conditions proved favourable to cattle and pigs, but unfavourable to sheep.

The fewness of sheep in the county is conspicuous. Out of more than 200 entries of "escapes" from the tenants on the Vale Royal estates and the Grey estates in 1303-1304, not one entry refers to sheep.[4] Neither sheep nor wool is mentioned in the *De Lacy Compoti* of 1295-1296 and 1304-1305.[5] Nor are any mentioned in the very detailed stock accounts of the manor of Macclesfield for the years 1348-1349, 1353-1354, 1355-1356.[6] In the first half of the fourteenth century very few are mentioned on the manors of the earl of Chester, while the small quantities of wool bought for export point to the same paucity.[7]

Some flocks there were, however, on the granges of the abbeys, though even here the indications are fragmentary. Occasional references to folds or to the sale or transport of wool doubtless point to the possession of sheep,[8] but they are too few for broad generalisation, while more specific references to sheep do not disclose the numbers kept. The abbot of Vale Royal uses his pasture in the grange of

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 5.

[2] A translation of the charter of disafforestation and a petition relating thereto are printed in R. Stewart-Brown, *The Disafforestation of Wirral*, 8-10.

[3] *Vide infra*, 58-63.

[4] The manors of Weaverham and Over belonging to the abbey of Vale Royal, and the manors of Rushton and Eaton belonging to Reginald de Grey. These are collected separately (*Chamber. Accts.*, 46-50). In a list of over 200 entries of "escapes" in 1302-1303 (not confined to the above estates) eight entries refer to sheep (*ibid.*, 27-32).

[5] *De Lacy Compoti*. For the extent of the De Lacy estates, *vide supra*, 26.

[6] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/4; 802/9, m. 4; 802/13.

[7] *Vide infra*, 48.

[8] *Vide infra*, 47-48.

Conwardsley for "sheep and other animals."[1] He complains when the bailiff of Frodsham prevents him driving his sheep down to Reemarsh.[2] The abbot of Combermere had received a grant of land for a grange at Wincle together with pasture for 2000 sheep (and other animals),[3] but whether he ever had any such number does not appear. Sheep do, however, appear to have been of some importance on the Combermere manors, for in 1336-1337 when the abbot was in financial difficulties, he produced a royal confirmation of a charter by which it was declared that no bailiff or other minister should distrain him by his sheep for debt, so long as he had other goods or chattels by which he could be distrained.[4]

There is very little further evidence of sheep on monastic estates in Cheshire in our period. It must, however, be made clear that while the general circumstances point to a scarcity of sheep in the county as a whole, the absence of accounts of the management of monastic estates forbids any definite conclusion respecting the granges of the abbeys. On the estates of the laity also, in the first half of the fourteenth century, flocks seem to have been few, but here the evidence is clear and statistical. At Frodsham, for example, in 1315-1316, the bailiff accounts for only 15 sheep of which 1 had died of a murrain shortly after the shearing.[5] After the turn of the century, and probably in some measure as a consequence of the Black Death, there were considerable flocks at Frodsham and at Eaton. At the former place, old folds were repaired,[6] and let to tenants;[7] pasture was let for the agistment of sheep,[8] and much expense was incurred on the construction of new pens and folds. In 1356-1357 the wages of carpenters and other workmen erecting a new pen at Mukledale amounted to £9 4s. 7d.[9]

In 1357-1358 the bailiff spent £13 15s. on the purchases of sheep. He had now 598 sheep on the manor, and one night in March, when 220 of them were in the custody of the shepherd's son, a fire broke out in the fold on the marsh, and many of the sheep were burnt,[10] while in the same year 70 others died of a disease called the "pelles."[11] The erection of the fold at Mukledale was continued, and a new fold was erected at the marsh, the expenses this year on the two works amounting to £19 10s. 0d.[12]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 161.
[2] *Ibid.*, 53.
[3] Ormerod, III, 769; *Recog. Rolls*, 119.
[4] "Harl." MS. 2072/116.
[5] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[6] Ibid., 784/11, m. 7.
[7] Ibid., 786/10, m. 4.
[8] Ibid., 786/10, m. 4; *Chamber. Accts.*, 188.
[9] *Ibid.*, 235.
[10] "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 7, *in dorso*. Robert, son of Thomas, the shepherd, forfeited his goods and chattels for the offence, but exactly how the fire arose the MS. does not indicate.
[11] *infirmitate del polles; infirmitate vocata pelles.*
[12] *Chamber. Accts.*, 242. The word used is *bercaria*, but the expense indicates that it must have been a substantial structure.

At Eaton, similarly, there were considerable flocks. The reeve's account for 1372-1373[1] points to over 400 sheep of one kind or another. Of these, the reeve explains, 15 were killed for consumption during the lord's stay at the manor in the autumn, 2 were killed for a love-bone in the autumn, 4 died of a murrain before the shearing, and 21 died after the shearing. Further he has paid 5s. 3d. for the folding of 63 sheep on the lord's land for manure and 1s. 8d. for milk for some lambs.

In these accounts there is no mention of loss from strangulation by wolves, and it is probable that by the middle of the century the county was free from this menace. Disease, however, was common, and as a remedy the bailiff or reeve resorted to tar and grease. At Frodsham in 1312-1313, 3s. 2d. was spent on these substances ;[2] in 1315-1316 the expense was only 6d. and the number of sheep treated was 14.[3] At Eaton in 1372-1373 the bailiff had spent 6s. 8d., purchasing four flagons of tar for 2s. 8d. and four flagons of grease for 4s.[4]

The values of the sheep raised naturally varied a good deal. In 1330, when several were given to the abbot of Vale Royal, he valued them at 1s. each.[5] In 1357-1358 the bailiff of Frodsham sold the following :—[6]

120	sheep	at	2s. 3d.	each.
16	,,	,,	1s. 6d.	,,
10	,,	,,	1s. 5d.	,,
1	,,	,,	1s.	,,
9	,,	,,	7½d.	,,

The sheep were kept, of course, primarily for their wool, and receipts for sales of wool and skins are duly entered in the accounts. At Frodsham (1315-1316) 14 fleeces, weighing 2 stones in all—reckoning 12 lbs. to the stone—have been sold for 8s. 5d.[7] In 1357-1358 part of the year's wool has been kept at the manor, the remainder, namely 12 stones 12½ lbs.—reckoning 16 lbs. to the stone—has been sold at 3s. 9½d. per stone, while 4s. have been received for " wool locks." [8] The reeve of Eaton in 1372-1373 sold 328 fleeces for £11, and some surplus wool for 3s. 4d.[9]

The details of a sale of wool by the abbot of Darnhall[10] are interesting. In the autumn of 1275, Abbot John sold to Giles de Ayre, the

[1] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/101-102.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 82.
[3] " Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[4] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/101-102.
[5] *V.R.L. Book*, 179-180.
[6] " Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 7.
[7] Ibid., 801/12.
[8] Ibid., 784/11, m. 7. The price of the wool sold in this instance is not to be taken as an indication of the quality of Cheshire wool, for it is described as " Refus et fratte." Apparently the better wool was kept apart.
[9] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/101-102. An entry in the accounts refers to the " wages of women for washing and shearing the sheep," but it is crossed out.
[10] Darnhall is a few miles from Vale Royal, whither the monks moved.

London agent of John Wermond of Cambrai, " twelve sack of good wool of the better crop of Hereford," at nine marks sterling a sack. The wool was to be without cot, or breech-wool, black or grey ; it was to be clean and dry and well washed, and weighed by the weight of Dore ; it was to be well pressed, and each sack was to contain four stones of wool. Giles paid 80 marks sterling on the day of the sale and promised to pay the remaining 28 marks on delivery. The abbot was to convey the wool to London at his own cost and risk. Should the abbot fail to deliver it by a specified date, he was liable to a penalty of £20 for every day he should be in default.[1]

In this instance the abbot sold his wool to the agent of the foreign merchant. Such direct sales to the foreigner or his agent may have been common in the early part of our period. The abbot of Conway also sold his wool direct to an Italian merchant,[2] and a further indication of direct trading—or efforts towards that end—is found in a survey of the wool production of English abbeys, incorporated in *La pratica della Mercatura*.[3] In the long list the following details are given respecting the quantity, quality and price of wool produced by religious houses in Cheshire :—

	Best.	Medium.	Poor.	Sacks per Annum.
Combermere .	21 marks	13 marks	10½ marks	6
Stanlaw . .	18 marks	10½ marks	7 marks	10
Vale Royal [4] .	—	—	—	6

Monastic bodies may have preferred direct dealings, but as early as the beginning of our period, there were merchants of Chester [5] who were engaged in the wool trade, and by the close of the thirteenth century the local purchasing of wool was wholly in the hands of Englishmen. In the early years of the reign of Edward II, William of Doncaster and Gilbert Dunfoul were associated with the trade,[6] and in the reign of Edward III, when the trade was becoming more highly organised and controlled, the purchasing of wool can be more closely followed.

[1] *C.Cl.R.* (1272-1279), 254. [2] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 235.

[3] Printed in Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (5th edn., 1915), I, 628-641.

[4] No details of quality and price are given for Vale Royal, *ibid.*, 634. There is an entry for a place designated as Sestri, but Dr. Cunningham held that it was more probably Colchester than Chester (*ibid.*, 640, *n.* 1).

The houses at Birkenhead and Norton are omitted.

[5] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 67. The names are Robert Erneys, Robert Mapdet, Alexander Hurel.

[6] *Recog. Rolls*, 150, 207, 222, 281, 355. *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 141. For the varied activities of William of Doncaster, *vide infra*, 129-130.

Edward III made an agreement with his merchants in 1337 by which commissions were appointed in each county to buy for the king's use 30,000 sacks of wool at certain fixed prices.[1] Henry Torold, Roger de Blorton, Robert de Ledsham and John Hawarden were appointed as buyers for Cheshire and Flint, and the price determined upon for this area was 9½ marks per sack,[2] that for Salop being 10½ marks, while for the four northern counties the price was only 5½ marks per sack.

Within a few months, Robert de Ledsham was unable to discharge his duties.[3] A substitute was found, therefore, and the commission, thus constituted, began its work by buying 200 sacks in the first year of its operations.[4] This is the smallest quantity mentioned in the list. Staffordshire with 600 sacks and Salop with 1500 sacks, would appear to have been far more important areas for wool production. On the other hand, Lancashire is not mentioned at all, and the combined figure for Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire is only 800 sacks. In the following year the society of the Bardi were permitted to load 800 sacks of wool in the port of London. Of these, 20 had been bought from Chester.[5] Again the figure is low in comparison with that of other counties, for Salop sent 200 sacks and Hereford 100. In 1339 and 1340 certain Florentine merchants acknowledged large debts to Richard de Bradburn and Henry Torold, citizens of Chester, probably for wool delivered in London.[6]

Since the export of wool from Chester was prohibited,[7] all this wool had to be taken across country to east coast ports. The quantities bought for the Italian merchants and for the king were conveyed to London, but other ports were sometimes used. In 1283, for example, the abbots of Stanlaw and Combermere sought protection for quantities they were sending to Boston,[8] and in 1309 William of Doncaster shipped some wool at Ipswich for the Flemish market. The dangers attending the transport of goods at that period are illustrated by the fate of his cargo. As the ship approached Flushing it was driven ashore by a storm. "Certain malefactors of Zealand" then seized the wool by force, disposed of it for 500 marks, and Doncaster had to invoke the aid of the king to press the Count of Hainault for justice.[9]

On the whole, it is clear that Cheshire's share in the wool trade was comparatively unimportant, and while various reasons have been advanced to account for the fewness of sheep in the county, one further consideration must be borne in mind; the people also were few. Local needs, therefore, whether for wool, hides or flesh were limited.

The same consideration must be kept in mind as we turn to the

[1] *C.Cl.R.* (1337-1339), 148. [2] *Ibid.*, 188. [3] *Ibid.*, 274.
[4] *Ibid.*, 270. [5] *Ibid.*, 499; *C.P.R.* (1338-1340), 129.
[6] *C.C.R.* (1339-1340), 214, 440, 471, 476. [7] *Vide infra*, 133.
[8] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 68, 122; *Cal. Chancery Rolls*—Welsh Rolls, 272.
[9] *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 141.

cattle in the county. They were relatively more numerous than the sheep, but the actual numbers are nowhere great.[1] The lists of "escapes" show that in the course of a year scores of cattle found their way from the pastures or commons,[2] and "Ministers' Accounts" similarly point to the straying of cattle,[3] but when the actual stock on a manor is detailed, the figures are lower than might be found in many counties. The following instances will give definiteness to our views :—

Halton (1294-95)[4]		
Oxen	1 of remainder, 1 of addition	2 remain.
Bulls	1 of remainder	1 remains.
Cows	8 of remainder, 2 of addition, 6 bought	16 remain.
Steers	2 yearlings of remainder	2 ,,
Yearlings	6 calves of remainder	6 ,,
Calves	7 born, 6 bought, total 13, of which 1 in tithe	12 ,,
Halton (1304-5)[5]		
Oxen	12 of remainder, 5 of addition, total 17, 10 sold	7 ,,
Bulls	2 of remainder, 1 of addition	3 ,,
Cows	46 of remainder, 10 of addition, 6 sold	50 ,,
Steers	20 yearlings of remainder (7 steers and 13 heifers)	20 ,,
Yearlings	35 calves of remainder	35 ,,
Calves	12 calves of the year, of which 2 in tithe and retithe	10 ,,
Frodhsam (1315-16)[6]		
Oxen	34 of remainder, 1 bought, and 2 received from David Wulder. Of these, 3 died	34 ,,
Steers	1 received from Richard Tyssy	1 remains.
Cows	14 of remainder, 2 from David Wulder, 3 from John Hurrel, 1 from Richard Tyssy. Of these, 2 died	18 remain.
Heifers	1 of remainder, 1 from the chattels of William Walle, 1 from Master William of Harpesfeld	3 ,,
Yearlings	2 calves one year old of remainder and 1 from David Wulder. Of these, 1 died	2 ,,

[1] The largest number I have found is in a final concord between Abbot Simon of Chester and Robert de Poole (1272) by which the latter agreed to allow pasture in Poole for 500 of the beasts of the monks and their men (*Chester Chartulary*, II, 385). This figure is, however, a permissible maximum, and in the absence of stock accounts of Chester Abbey, it is not possible to affirm that the abbot ever had such a number.

[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 27-32, 46-50.

[3] E.g., "Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 4. And pinfolds are mentioned as at Dunham "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*.

[4] *De Lacy Compoti*, 146.

[5] *Ibid.*, 155.

[6] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12. The account has been condensed slightly. Except Master William of Harpesfeld, the men mentioned are felons.

Frodsham (1315-16) [1]		
Calves	3 calves (male), half year old. Of these 2 died	1 remains.
Calves	2 calves (female), half year old	2 remain
Calves	3 calves born this year—and sold, and concerning 10 heifers joined with the cows above, he answers nothing, because none of them went to the bull	none remains.
Drakelowe (1350-51) [2]		
Oxen	24 of remainder, 2 bought, 2 sold	24 remain.
Cows	1 of remainder, 3 bought, 1 received	5 ,,
Calves	1 born, 2 bought, 1 received	4 ,,
Macclesfield (1353-54) [3]		
Oxen	6 received from the Chamberlain	
Bulls	6 received, 3 sold	3 ,,
Cows	71 received, 27 sold	44 ,,
Steers	12 received, 1 sold	11 ,,
Heifers	(3 years old), 6 received	6 ,,
Heifers	(2 years old), 12 received	12 ,,
Yearlings	8 received	8 ,,
Calves	40 received	40 ,,
Macclesfield (1356-57) [4]		
Oxen	16 of remainder, 26 received, 13 by [5] transfer, 2 bought, 5 died	52 ,,
Bulls	2 of remainder, 3 received	5 ,,
Cows	84 of remainder, 60 received, 32 by transfer,[5] 10 died	166 ,,
Steers	13 of remainder, 17 received, 21 by transfer; 13 are reckoned with the oxen above	38 ,,
Stirks	21 of remainder, 16 by transfer, 8 received, 1 died and 21 are reckoned with the steers above	23 ,,
Heifers (3 years old)	32 of remainder, 5 by transfer, 4 received, 10 bought; 32 are reckoned with the cows above	19 ,,
Heifers (2 years old)	5 of remainder, 21 by transfer, 9 received; 5 are reckoned with the 3-year-old heifers above, 3 died	27 ,,
Yearlings	34 yearlings, 53 by transfer, 15 received, 16 are reckoned with the steers, 21 with the heifers, 16 died	59 ,,
Calves	68 of remainder (others), total 153, tithe 5.	

[1] See note 6 on previous page. [2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 198.

[3] " Ministers' Accounts," 802/9. This account has been condensed so as to give figures only, but some important details are given on p. 53 below.

[4] Ibid., 802/13. This account also has been reduced to the bare figures, but certain details are given below, pp. 53-54.

[5] I have used the words " by transfer " to indicate that as the stock grow older, a certain number of each class are transferred each year to another class.

Eaton (1372-73)[1]		
Oxen	18 of remainder, 1 died	17 remain.
Bulls	1	1 remains.
Cows	23 of remainder, 3 by transfer, 1 killed	25 remain.
Steers and Heifers	3 heifers of remainder, and they are reckoned with the cows above.	
Yearlings	11 of remainder; 2 killed	9 ,,
Calves	26 born.[2]	

With the exception of the Macclesfield stocks, these figures are not high. Stocks as large, or indeed considerably larger, were maintained in other counties both by lay lords and by monastic corporations. Even in Lancashire, larger herds were supported on the Lacy estates.[3] That a fairly high percentage of the cattle died from disease is evident. There was a cattle plague in 1276, and a murrain, of course, is assigned as the reason for the death of certain animals in each minister's stock account. That some, judged by their sale price, were poor, is clear. These things are not remarkable in mediæval agriculture. Nevertheless, two interesting features may be noted—the one respecting the management of the earl's stock, the other respecting the relation of Cheshire and North Wales.

The earl's manors did not lie in a group. Their positions may be roughly described by reference to an obtuse-angled triangle. From Frodsham the distance to Shotwick (via Chester) is about 16 miles; to Macclesfield about 30 miles; while the longer side (Shotwick to Macclesfield) is rather more than 40 miles. The fourth manor, Drakelowe, lies a little south of this longer side, being about 15 miles distant from Macclesfield and the same distance from Frodsham. A single day, therefore, would suffice for the journey of an official from one manor to the most distant: supervision was not difficult.

Now there is no evidence of an "earl's steward" in Cheshire in the fourteenth century.[4] There were officials known as the "earl's mason," the "earl's carpenter" and even the "earl's plumber,"[5] but there was no official whose sole business was the supervision of these manors. Some degree of supervision was, however, exercised by the chamberlain

[1] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102.

[2] The reeve does not state how many calves remain, but on the front of this roll he accounts for the sale of 10.

[3] For stocks in Lancashire, especially on De Lacy estates, see *De Lacy Compoti*, 127-139; *The Great de Lacy Inquisition* in *Three Lancashire Documents* (C.S., LXXIV); *Lancashire Inquests*, Part II, 1310-1333 (Record Society, Vol. 54); *V.C.H. Lancs.*, II, 268.

[4] In *Chamber. Accts.*, 121, Richard de Stafford is mentioned as "steward of all the prince's lands." This designation only occurs once, and although Richard is repeatedly found in the county as justice of the forests, or in association with the justice of the county on other business, there is no indication of any supervision of manorial management.

[5] *Vide infra*, 94-96.

of Chester.[1] Not only were the manorial accounts rendered to him and incorporated in his accounts; not only did he supply funds for repairs and renewals, and enter into contracts for extensive works. His authority extended to the purchase and sale of cattle, and he appears to have bought cattle himself and forwarded them to the various manors. It is doubtful whether this authority is explicitly defined in the letters appointing any chamberlain to his office. It is likely that in the earlier part of our period, his authority was more limited, but in the later part, his power is undoubted. The keeper of the Macclesfield stud, for example, had power to dispose of stock, when necessary, with the "consent of the chamberlain of Chester." [2]

How far the chamberlain exercised his authority it is difficult to define with precision, but that his hand was at work may be inferred from the movement of stock and sometimes of horses from one manor to another. Such animals were transferred without any cash payment, being simply noted in the accounts as "received from the bailiff" of the other manor—usually "by an indenture." The bailiff of Frodsham, for example, has delivered an ox at Shotwick; [3] the bailiff of Drakelowe notes that an ox which had died belonged to the stock of Frodsham; [4] the grave of Shotwick has received eight foals from the keeper of the prince's stud at Macclesfield.[5] These may seem small exchanges, but they indicate a working connection between the manors, which is illustrated on a much larger scale by the transfer of stock from Shotwick, Frodsham and Drakelowe to Macclesfield.

For Macclesfield differed from the other manors in that it was primarily a stud farm. Here, some 550 feet above sea level, lay the manor hall, surrounded by a great barricade.[6] In the park was the stud, and the fair in the borough of Macclesfield afforded facilities for the sale of cattle. The manor was not only a breeding place for cattle. The earl's stallion was kept here also.[7] Even fish were brought here to stock the vivary,[8] and while a bailiff was usually in charge of the manor, there was also an official of greater importance known variously as the "lord's (or earl's or prince's) stock-keeper," or even as "keeper and surveyor of the earl's stock in the county of Chester and keeper of the manor and park of Macclesfield." [9] The title was impressive, but, as already stated, his authority was limited by a certain subordination to the Chamberlain of Chester, and although he had certain free pasture

[1] For the relations between the chamberlain and the earl's council, *vide supra*, 29.

[2] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/9, m. 4. [3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 188.

[4] *Ibid.*, 194, 198. [5] "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 5.

[6] "Eyre Roll"—Chester, 17/13, m. 39. "Manerium de Macclesfield integrum fuit et inclusum ex omni parte de jarello ex planceis de quercu. . . ." The repair of this barricade is noted in *Chamber. Accts.*, 44. Other repairs at the manor are noted, *ibid.*, 25, 126.

[7] *Vide infra*, 56-57. [8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 254. [9] *Recog. Rolls*, 132.

for his own animals, his office was only worth 40s. a year, with a robe, or 13s. 4d. in lieu of a robe.[1]

Now while a few animals might pass in the course of a year from Drakelowe to Frodsham or Shotwick, much larger movements took place from these manors to Macclesfield. In 1353-1354 the stock-keeper accounted[2] for:—

6	oxen	received	from	the Chamberlain.
1	bull	,,	,,	,, ,,
1	,,	,,	,,	,, grave of Frodsham.
1	,,	,,	,,	,, ,, ,, Shotwick.
1	,,	,,	,,	,, bailiff of Drakelowe.
24	cows	,,	,,	,, Chamberlain.
25	,,	,,	,,	,, grave of Frodsham.
10	,,	,,	,,	,, ,, ,, Shotwick.
8	,,	,,	,,	,, bailiff of Drakelowe.
8	stirks	,,	,,	,, grave of Frodsham.
3	,,	,,	,,	,, ,, ,, Shotwick.
1	stirk	,,	,,	,, bailiff of Drakelowe.
22	heifers	,,	,,	,, grave of Frodsham.
8	yearlings		,,	,, bailiff of Drakelowe.
9	calves	,,	,,	,, Chamberlain.
6	,,	,,	,,	,, grave of Frodsham
6	,,	,,	,,	,, ,, ,, Shotwick.
3	,,	,,	,,	,, bailiff of Drakelowe.

In the same year, additional stock was bought as follows: 15 cows, 9 bullocks, 5 stirks, 7 heifers, 4 oxen, the total cost being £11 3s. 4d.[3]

It might be surmised that this large movement of cattle to Macclesfield represented the process of re-stocking after a wholesale clearing out. The view is not impossible, but it must be considered in the light of further evidence. And further evidence shows that large numbers of cattle were sent to Macclesfield at other dates. For example, only three years later (1356-1357), the stock keeper accounted[4] for:—

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/9, m. 4, gives details of the rights attaching to the office in 1353-1354. In "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13, there is a somewhat different statement for 1356-1357. In the latter instance there is no reference to the power to sell stock.

[2] Ibid., 802/9, m. 4.

[3] The purchase of these cattle is noted under the Chamberlain's expenses (*Chamber. Accts.*, 216). The purchase of those noted as "received from the Chamberlain" in the preceding list above, probably took place in the preceding year (or they may have been acquired without purchase). The delivery (but not the price) of the 6 oxen, 1 bull and 24 cows is noted (*ibid.*, 219). I have been unable to trace the 9 calves.

[4] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13.

18 oxen	received	from	the bailiff	of Frodsham.
2 bulls	,,	,,	,,	,,
29 cows	,,	,,	,,	,,
12 steers	,,	,,	,,	,,
3 yearlings	,,	,,	,,	,,
3 heifers	,,	,,	,,	,,
8 heifers (2 yrs. old)	,,	,,	,,	,,
3 yearling calves	,,	,,	,,	,,
15 calves	received	,,	,,	,,

Nor are these the only cattle received in that year by the stock-keeper ; a large number had come from a Welsh source. At the hands of Rhys [1] ap Iorweth ap Ithel and Iorweth ap Madoc, the stock-keeper had received the following animals, some, if not all, of which had previously belonged to the bishop of St. Asaph [2] :—

8 oxen	1 heifer.
1 bull.	1 heifer (2 years old).
31 cows.	12 yearling calves.
5 steers.	11 calves.
5 yearlings.	

There had, moreover, been large movements of cattle from Wales at an earlier date. For example in 1347-1348 no less than 68 oxen were bought at Ruthin and Abergele and sent to Macclesfield.[3] It is clear, therefore, that in the middle of the fourteenth century, the stock of the manor of Macclesfield were gathered not only from various parts of the county, but from more distant places also.

The purpose and result of this accumulating of stock must remain in large measure a matter for conjecture. The end of the stock is also obscure, for the evidence is fragmentary. Beyond the date and the aggregate value of a few sales, little can be learned. The local fair held on the feast of All Saints appears to have been an important centre for the sale of cattle. In 1301-1302, when the earl's castles were being stocked with provisions, Macclesfield was chosen as one of three centres for the purchase of oxen for slaughtering ; [4] and although there is no evidence that the cattle purchased on this occasion had been raised or fed at the manor of Macclesfield, it is clear that in later years some of the cattle were sold by the stock-keeper at the local fair. In 1354-1355, for example, he sold cattle to the value of £12 10s. at the fair on All Saints' Day.[5] In other years, the sales of larger numbers may be traced

[1] I am not sure that Rhys is the name intended by the scribe. The word occurs several times in a contracted form and appears to be Ren., or sometimes Reid. Possibly the writer did not understand Welsh and made what he deemed to be a phonetic equivalent.

[2] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13.

[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 124-125.

[4] *Ibid.*, 7, 10.

[5] *Ibid.*, 223.

but the place of sale is usually not mentioned. In 1348-1349 (the year after the transfer of the 68 oxen from Ruthin and Abergele), the steward mentions that 127 oxen and 6 cows which had cost £56 15s. 0½d., have been sold for £62 1s. 4d., yielding a profit of £5 6s. 3½d.[1] In 1358-1359, cattle to the value of £16 were sold,[2] and in the following year, sales of cattle realised £21 10s. 8d.[3]

We cannot leave the Macclesfield stud without some surmise respecting the quality of the cattle of mediæval Cheshire.

(1) What attempts, if any, were made to improve the stock?
(2) Were Welsh cattle imported for breeding purposes?
(3) Did the cattle of North Wales differ in breed from those of Cheshire in the Middle Ages?
(4) Did the importation of Welsh cattle, in fact, have any effect on the quality of the stocks in Cheshire?

The fact that evidence is insufficient to afford a conclusive answer to any of these four questions, need not prohibit all reasoning about the matter.

By raiding in war time, by purchase in time of peace, quantities of cattle passed from Wales into Cheshire. That many of those purchased were intended for slaughter and consumption, rather than for breeding, is clear, for Chester was a market for parts of North Wales throughout the Middle Ages. That the seizure of choice cattle was not a primary object of war against the Welsh may also be conceded.[4] Nevertheless, the subject of war booty is not wholly irrelevant to our inquiry. The cattle transferred by mediæval combatants to their own territory were sometimes chosen with care, only the best in point of size, quality or colour being selected.[5] Even when, as probably more frequently happened, all cattle within a certain area were seized, the driving of the mixed herd over a long distance—sometimes in haste—would lead to the falling out of weaklings by the way: the effect is selective. We infer, therefore, that the result of raiding or war is to bring the better, rather than the worse, cattle over the border.

Whether these cattle differed from those of Cheshire in breed or colour or size, it is difficult to determine. Ordinarily, of course, the cattle would be larger and of better quality on good land than on the poorer land of the hill districts. Cattle from the Vale of Clwyd and the coastal region of Flintshire were probably as good as those of

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/4, m. 1. [2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 246.

[3] *Ibid.*, 260. In illustration of the value of cattle at Macclesfield, the following figures may be quoted from the account for 1356-1357:—oxen: 1 at 10s.; 4 at 10s.; cows: 2 at 8s. 6d.; 1 at 6s. 9d.; 1 at 7s.—"Ministers' Accounts," 802/13. At Frodsham in 1357-1358, one ox was sold for 11s. 6d. and another for 13s. 4d.—"Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 7.

[4] For illustrations of seizure of cattle in war, *vide infra*, p. 84 and 84 *n.* 6.

[5] For this statement, I am indebted to Professor Bryner Jones, of the Department of Agriculture at the University College, Aberystwyth.

Cheshire and probably differed little in type.[1] In so far as there were differences, the frequent mixing of stock would lead to herds that were mixed in colour and type, and this would be true all along the Marches. While, therefore, Welsh cattle may have been sought for their size, they probably were not sought for anything distinctive in breed.

We cannot, however, ignore the importance of Macclesfield Park as a place for breeding and fattening. The purchasing of cattle expressly for this stock, the appointment of a special stock-keeper, the high proportion of bulls kept, the care taken with the lord's stallion, the drafting of cattle from the other manors, and even from Wales to the most distant of the earl's Cheshire manors—these things leave little doubt that the breeding of stock was seriously undertaken in one place at least. Tentatively we put forward the view that the mixing of cattle of Welsh origin with those of Cheshire was not detrimental to Cheshire stocks. It may have improved them.

Macclesfield had one further noteworthy feature ; horses were bred there. A few horses were kept at each of the other manors for haulage and in some instances for ploughing.[2] Their cost price was usually low [3] and they were probably typical of the draught horses of the period. But at Macclesfield, a valuable stallion [4] was kept, the park was set aside for horses, an official was in charge, and some care was expended on the question of breeding.

In 1329, the following animals were handed over to a new " keeper of the stable " :— [5]

2 stallions (1 black, 1 grey).
23 mares (8 from the greater stable, 15 from the lesser).
5 colts, $4\frac{1}{2}$ years old.
4 ,, $3\frac{1}{2}$,, ,,
4 ,, $2\frac{1}{2}$,, ,,
4 foals, $2\frac{1}{2}$,, ,,
21 colts of issue.

In 1356-1357 there were :— [6]

1 black stallion of remainder, with a white star on his forehead and on his left hind foot.
11 mares of remainder (4 black with a star on the forehead, 4 grey, 1 sorrel, 1 brown, 1 grisel).
1 brown mare, " by transfer."

[1] For this view also, I am indebted to Professor Bryner Jones.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 197.
[3] One was sold at Frodsham for 4s. 4d. and another for 8s. in 1357-1358—" Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 7. A cart horse (affer) was bought there in 1315-1316 for 14s.—" Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[4] In 1329 there were two stallions (*vide infra*) and in 1359-1360 there were two or more. *Chamber. Accts.*, 273-274.
[5] " Additional Charters," 37261. [6] " Ministers' Accounts," 802/13.

3 colts, 4 years old.
3 ,, 3 ,, ,,
3 ,, 2 ,, ,,
3 ,, 1 ,, ,,

It is probable that the management of the stud at Macclesfield underwent changes from time to time, and it is not clear that horses and cattle were always in the charge of the same keeper. Alexander atte Crosse (1353) is styled "keeper of the prince's stock . . . of horses, mares, oxen, cows and sheep,"[1] and John Alcock (1356) has a similar title with a statement that he has three boys—one for the stallion and stud of horses, one for the animals in the forest, and one for the cows and calves.[2] John of Lindsay (1329), on the other hand, is simply keeper of the stable (*custos equitii*)[3] and the indenture by which he received his stock, related to horses only.[4]

But whatever form the management might take, all the evidence points to great care being taken of the stock. A separate account was kept for the stallion. His hay and his oats, his horse-cloth and girth, his shoes and his bridle, all are duly entered. Even his sickness is set down.[5] One such stallion—a bay—cost £5 6s. 8d.[6] Such an animal naturally merited care. As for the mares and foals, there was, of course, some movement from, and to, other parts of the county. In 1353-1354, for example, 3 mares with their foals were bought from the abbot of Vale Royal, and 1 mare with her foal from Robert Sherard.[7] In the following year, £2 13s. 4d. was spent on the purchase of mares,[8] and in 1356-1357, 10 mares were bought.[9] The disposal of the foals is more difficult to trace. Some may have been sent to the earl's manors in Cheshire or other counties, some may have been broken and trained for the prince's service, some sold, and some kept for breeding purposes. They are seldom mentioned. One was killed as useless for the stud,[10] and there is a detailed entry concerning 8 all stamped with the lord's sign, which were transferred to the manor of Shotwick in June, 1358,[11] and handed over to the Chamberlain in December of the same year.[12] Three were four-year-olds and are described thus: the first black, with a long white mark on his forehead; the second black; the third brown. The remainder were three-year-olds, and coloured

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/9, m. 4. [2] Ibid., 802/13.
[3] "Additional Charters," 37261.
[4] The manor at this time was in the hands of Queen Isabella, *vide supra*, 26.
[5] Some details are in *Chamber. Accts.*, 6, 26, 44, and similar details in "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13.
[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 11.
[7] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/9, m. 4. The prices are quoted in the *Chamber. Accts.*, 215, 216, and the average for a mare and foal is 35s. 10d.—a high value.
[8] *Ibid.*, 231. [9] "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13.
[10] Ibid., 802/9, m. 4. It was the foal of the mare bought from Robert Sherard.
[11] Ibid., 784/11, m. 5. [12] *Chamber. Accts.*, 256.

as follows : the fourth black ; the fifth black with a white star on its forehead ; the sixth grey with a long white mark on its nose ; the seventh sorrel ; the eighth grisel with a long white mark on its forehead. These are stated to have been bred at Macclesfield, and the colouring of some of them may be attributed to the black stallion with the white star on his forehead mentioned in the account for 1356-1357.[1]

In comparison with the cattle, horses were few. Pigs, on the other hand, were numerous. They were indeed numerous in most parts of England in the Middle Ages, but Cheshire had two advantages for pig rearing, viz. :—extensive forests with an abundance of oak trees, and an excellent supply of good salt. The latter was a factor of great importance at a time when meat had to be kept for long periods.

Local production in grain and in mutton may scarcely have sufficed for local needs, but of pork and bacon there was a sufficiency, and perhaps at times an excess. It might be unsafe to deduce comparisons from the requisitions for mediæval armies. Such requisitions must, however, in many instances have been drawn up with some reference to local productions. Cheshire, for example, was required to supply salt.[2] But much more interesting is the fact that Cheshire was called upon for large quantities of bacon. In 1308, for example, when provisions were being hurried northward for an expedition against the Scots, Cheshire was required to supply 400 bacon hogs, while Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Salop and Staffordshire—all larger and more populous than Cheshire—provided only 300 each.[3] Again, in 1333 for another Scottish expedition, Cheshire's quota of pigs was 200, while Derbyshire was to supply 200 and Nottingham and Lincoln 500 each.[4] The exportation of such quantities of food was, of course, infrequent, but it throws some light on local conditions. By far the greater part of the flesh produced must have been consumed within the county by lord and peasant, or used for the provisioning of Chester castle.[5]

For the most part the pig was the peasant's animal. Demesne pigs were kept at the Grey manor of Eaton,[6] at the Grosvenor manor of (Little) Budworth,[7] and at times at the earl's manor of Frodsham,[7] but at the earl's other manors there appear to have been no demesne pigs, nor were they kept on the Lacy (later the Lancaster) manors. But the peasants kept them, let them get their living wherever they could, and turned them into the woods and forests in the autumn to fatten on the beech-mast or acorns. This privilege was highly valued and was usually conditional on some form of payment, the terms

[1] *Vide supra*, 56.
[2] *Vide infra*, 113.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 81.
[4] *C.Cl.R.* (1333-1337), 25-26.
[5] Cf. *Chamber. Accts.*, 10. (Large quantities of flesh and fish were purchased for the castles in 1301-1302.)
[6] *Vide infra*, 61.
[7] *Vide infra*, 60.

varying from place to place, and in some instances providing no small revenue to the lord.

The forests were, of course, excellent areas for pannage. From Wirral, the earl received no payment, " because the lord has no soil there," [1] but from Delamere he received in money and in kind a considerable sum. In the first place, nine townships on the confines of the forest—Helsby, Manley, Mouldsworth, Budworth, Utkinton, Tarporley, Wettenhall, Minshull and Oulton Lowe—paid by custom 17 pigs every year to the earl.[2] In the *Chamberlains' Accounts*, it is repeatedly stated that this payment is independent of the question whether there are acorns or not, but in view of the location of the townships and the nature of the payment, it is very likely that it originated in pannage, and probably it entitled the inhabitants of those places to free agistment.[3] Secondly, there was the general scale applicable to " men of Cheshire " and " of other parts whatsoever," agisting their pigs in Delamere forest. The terms were as follows : each man having in the agistment 7 pigs or more up to 10 paid 1 pig (to be chosen according to the custom of the forest). If he had from 10 to 16 pigs, he paid 1 pig and a penny. For the agistment of 17 to 20 pigs, he rendered 2 pigs ; and for 21 pigs, 2 pigs and a penny, " and so on to infinity." Men who had less than 7 pigs in the agistment paid 1d. per pig.[4] These were the terms in Delamere.[5]

On lands outside the forests, the payment was usually called " tack," a term widely used, and on the duchy of Lancaster manors, it was called " thistletack," a much rarer term.[6] A few instances will illustrate the customs of different manors. At Tarvin, the men of Burton and Farndon pay 1d. a pig, while the men of Tarvin proper who have from 6 to 10 pigs must choose the best three and the lord will choose from these the best one. If any man has 20 pigs, the lord will have the

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 147, 200 ; " Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 2 ; " Eaton " MS., Edward III/110.

[2] Oulton Lowe paid one pig and the others two each. The payment occurs in each year's account—*Chamber. Accts.*, 2, 16, 35, 89, 104, 201, 206, 222, 232, 245, 259 ; " Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 2, *in dorso* ; " Eaton " MS., Edward III/110.

[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, Introd. xx.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3, 4. For a statement of customs elsewhere, see Cox, *Royal Forests of England*, 42.

[5] Some of the barons had petitioned Earl Ranulf Blundeville for liberty to feed their swine in the forests, but the petition had been rejected. See the Magna Carta of Cheshire in *Chester Chartulary*, 102, clause 17.

[6] I have found six instances of its usage, and in five it appears to be a simple payment for pannage : " VId. de pannagio porcorum del Thisteltak ; pannagium quod dicitur Thisteltak ; iiis, Xd. de pannagio vocato Thisteltak ; " " Ministers' Accounts," 4/24. The word is used twice similarly in " Ministers' Accounts," 4/32, and it occurs without the word pannage in *De Lacy Compoti*, 152. The word is defined in the *New English Dictionary*. See also *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, Vol. II, pp. 73 f.

best two, while those men who have fewer than 6 will pay 1d. a pig.[1] At Knutsford, the burgesses will render the " third best " pig as pannage.[2] At Halton a customary tenant having 10 pigs will give the lord the third best pig ; if he has 6 he shall still give the third best, but the lord will return him 6d. ; if he has fewer than 6 pigs, he shall pay at the rate of 2d. a pig.[3] At Frodsham, each man having 7 pigs or more pays 1 pig.[4] At Altrincham, burgesses will render the rightful tack.[5] At Over, " they shall give pannage like as other of our tenants." [6] These were fixed terms applying in most instances to all men, bond or free, living on the manor.

In the course of time, some few men had received grants rendering them free from the burden of paying pannage in certain woods. They were said to be tack free.[7] Foresters also might be quit of pannage in the forest.[8] The abbot of Chester had the right to have 50 pigs in the woods of Bebington free from the payment of pannage,[9] and the Bradfords could turn their demesne pigs into Delamere forest in mast time without payment.[10]

Such grants or privileges were, however, the possession of only a small proportion of the population. Other men paid their dues, and were sharply watched by the officers of the forest, some of whom received additional payment during the pannage season.[11] The foresters also took charge of straying pigs.[12] The regarders noted any encroachments for hog runs in the forest,[13] and occasionally a dispute led to a lively episode. In 1325-1326, for example, the abbot of Vale Royal had sold the season's acorns of Bradford wood to Richard de Bulkelegh, and at pannage time, Richard turned 40 pigs into the wood. Robert le Grosvenor (a forester and also a neighbour of the abbot) and another man seized all Richard's pigs, broke down the abbot's fence and turned 50 of their own pigs into the wood. Thereupon the abbot sent three servants to seize the 50 pigs and drive them to his grange of Knights. Here he kept them while the offended Grosvenor and his friend took

[1] " Harl." MS. 2115/230. This is a copy of an extent of Tarvin taken from the " Blue Book " of Lichfield.

[2] The Charter of William de Tabley is printed in Ormerod, I, 488-489.

[3] " Harl." MS. 2115/109. This is a transcript of an extent of Halton in 2 Edward III.

[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 189.

[5] The charter of Hamo de Massy is printed in Ormerod, I, 536.

[6] The charter is printed in *V.R.L. Book*, 188.

[7] *Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 3927, c. 4463; Ormerod, II, 649.

[8] An inquisition printed in Ormerod, III, 538 *n.*

[9] *Chester Chartulary*, 375.

[10] *Recog. Rolls*, 477.

[11] Those in Macclesfield Forest received 1d. a day—Inquisition in Ormerod, III, 538 *n.*

[12] *Chamber. Accts.*, 28, 29, 31, 32, 46.

[13] The prior of Birkenhead was found to have a porcheria in the forest of Wirral. " Forest Proceedings "—Chester 33/2, m. 3. The abbot of Darnhall (Vale Royal) complained that Warin le Grosvenor deforced his men from having their hog runs in the woods (*V.R.L. Book*, 44).

the dispute to law, brought writs of replevin against the abbot, but failed to prosecute and ultimately acknowledged that the wood in question was enclosed and disafforested.[1]

The herds of 40 and 50 swine mentioned above are examples of the numbers kept by lords in mid Cheshire. For more detailed statements, we may quote the " Ministers' Accounts " of the manors of Frodsham and Eaton. At Frodsham in 1315-1316, the stock included :—[2]

Boars	1 of remainder	1 remains.
Sows	3 of remainder; of which 1 died in a murrain before Easter, and 2 were sold	0 ,,
Pigs	10 male pigs of remainder, 6 from the chattels of David Wuldar, a felon, 7 from the chattels of John de Willaston	23 remain.
Hogs	35 of remainder, of which 7 died in a murrain before Easter	28 ,,
Porkers	5 of remainder, of which 2 died in a murrain before Easter	3 ,,

At Eaton in 1372-1373, there were :—[3]

Boars	1 by transfer
Sows	4 of remainder.
Pigs	6 of remainder; 40 by transfer, of which 3 are accounted for in the expenses of entertaining the lord.
Hogs	43 of remainder; 1 from the stock of Adam Stabler.
Porkers	48 born this year.

Such herds, of course, far outnumbered those of the peasants. For them 5 to 7 may have been a common figure. It is hazardous to generalise, but a survey of forfeitures, fines for straying pigs and payments for pannage point to some such figure as likely. The total number of pigs agisted in the woods of a certain manor may also be roughly estimated from the payment, the rate commonly being about 1d. a pig. In 1302-1303, the men of Dunham and Trafford paid 7s.[4] and in the following year when the number of tenants was 22, they paid 9s. 2½d.[5] At Frodsham there appears to have been no payment for pannage in 1315-1316, the agistment being confined to cattle and sheep,[6] but in 1350-1351, the receipts under this head amounted to 28s. 6d., as well as 2 pigs received from those who had agisted more than 7,[7] while in 1368-1369, the receipts were 33s. 2d.[8] This is a high figure, indicating—if the common rate of 1d. a pig was customary here—nearly 400 pigs. From the Lacy (later the Lancaster) estates the following may be chosen for the year 1295-1296 :—[9]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 122-123.
[2] " Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[3] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/101-102.
[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 34.
[5] *Ibid.*, 72.
[6] " Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[7] *Chamber. Accts.*, 189.
[8] " Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 4.
[9] *De Lacy Compoti*, 143.

Cash	Pannage of Whitley, deducting tithe and redecima	£0	10 3½
	Pannage of the foreign wood before Halton	0	9 0
	Pannage of Halton and Runcorn, deducting tithe and redecima	0	11 6½
Kind	32 hogs from pannage of the above, sold, deducting tithe and redecima	3	12 0
	Thistletak of Northwood [1]	1	9 10

These figures again point to large numbers of pigs.

In some instances, however, much smaller sums are noted as—6d. at Cogshall; 3s. 10d. at Bidston [2] (1351-1352); 3s. 5d. at Runcorn; 2d. at Moore; 7s. 2d. at Halton [3] (1371-1372).

As for the pigs agisted in the forests, the numbers vary greatly from year to year. In 1279 the pannage was handed to the abbot of Vale Royal who received 63s. 6d. and 80 pigs valued at £8.[4] These receipts point to more than 1500 pigs. In 1301-1302 the pannage of Delamere Forest yielded no less than 150 pigs and £21 1s. 10d.[5] The receipt of such large numbers of pigs must have been inconvenient to the earl's staff, and before the middle of the century the pannage of Delamere Forest was farmed. A change was also made with the 17 pigs received annually from the nine townships. In 1301-1302 they were worth 56s. 8d.[6] and the following year 51s. 0d.[7] By 1326-1327 the render had been converted into a fixed payment of 68s., which appears each year in the accounts.[8]

Such substitution of a money bargain for a payment rendered in kind was characteristic of the period. Ancient customs and ancient tenures, however, long lingered. Even if payment were made in coin, it was necessary to explain the origin of certain dues and the explanation was not uncommonly an obligation to render pigs. The men of Bridgehouses and Netherton rendered each year 6 pigs of custom at the manor of Frodsham. As late as 1350-1351, they appear to have rendered the animals, which realised only 15s. as the bailiff explains.[9] In 1368-1369 the bailiff accounted for 18s. from this source,[10] but whether the sum rose from the sale of the pigs or was a commuted payment is not clear. Similarly on the Vale Royal estates, pigs appear in the terms of tenure. A Grosvenor in doing homage to the abbot in 1305, acknowledged that he held the manor of Lostock by suits at court, certain

[1] *De Lacy Compoti*, 152.
[2] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24. These payments are for thistletak.
[3] Ibid., 4/32. These payments are for thistletak.
[4] *V.R.L. Book*, 194.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2.
[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 3.
[7] *Ibid.*, 16
[8] *Ibid.*, 104, 147, 201, 206, 222, 245, 259; "Eaton" MS., Edward III/110; "Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 2, *in dorso*.
[9] *Chamber. Accts.*, 189.
[10] "Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 4.

payments, certain military service and two customary pigs.[1] A lesser tenant declared he held of his lord " by ancient conquest from the time of William the Bastard," for a rent of 2s. a year, one customary pig, and suit of court.[2] It should be stated, however, that in a detailed rent roll of 1334, very few of the tenants rendered pigs.[3]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 115. [2] *Ibid.*, 114.
[3] *Ibid.*, 92-113. Two men tenants (*ibid.*, 107, 108) and two widows (*ibid.*, 110) were stated to render pigs.

CHAPTER IV.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT.

The principal roads of mediæval Cheshire were those made by the Romans. It was natural, therefore, that Chester, a Roman city, should be the focus of communications. Guarded on two sides by the Dee, protected by its walls and castle, it held the key to North Wales. It was, moreover, a seaport ; it had a weekly market and an annual fair ; it was the centre of government. On Chester, therefore, the chief roads converged. They follow no river valleys but their courses are in some measure determined by natural features, for they pass through gaps in the long crescent-shaped ridge of high land which runs from Frodsham towards Malpas.

The traveller from the north crossed the Mersey at Warrington, the Weaver at Frodsham, and passed along the low-lying plain into Chester. From the north-east and east, he came along the Watling Street, crossing the Weaver at Northwich, passing through the narrow gap at Kelsall, leaving the Roman road for two or three miles near Tarvin, but rejoining it at Stamford Bridge, and thence to Chester. Several routes from the south converge on Nantwich whence the road ran through the " passage " of Tarporley [1] to Chester. A fourth road crossed the Dee at Holt and passed along the right bank of the river through Aldford into Chester.[2] On the western side of the Dee the road from Chester branched out to Flint, Rhuddlan, Conway and Anglesey, to Mold and Denbigh and to Central Wales.

One important highway passed through the county without touching Chester. The road from Lancashire to London crossed Warrington bridge and then proceeded via Northwich [3] and Middlewich to Newcastle-under-Lyme, while another—though less important—road,

[1] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. II, No. 256; *Cal. Inq. post mortem*, Vol. V, No. 251.

[2] *Liber Luciani*, 64. (The *Roman* road from Aldford to Chester had crossed the Dee at Aldford and had passed along the *left* bank of the river.)

[3] The route from Warrington to Northwich was defined in 28 Edward III. It was then found that there were two roads in use—one via Appleton, the other via Wilderspool and Hullscliff. The two roads joined near Stretton. Toll was charged on the latter road " because it was not of right the highway." *Deputy Keepers' Reports*, XXVIII, 47.

skirting the Pennine uplands, passed from Macclesfield through Congleton to Newcastle-under-Lyme.[1]

The roads already mentioned may be considered the main arteries of traffic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were of sufficient importance to have bridges where they crossed the larger rivers. Bridges, however, were few, and many of the less important roads crossed the streams and rivers at fords. The Dee, for example, could be crossed at several points, though, according to Higden, it was believed that the fords frequently changed.[2] It is not possible to determine the extent to which these fords were used in time of peace. It is clear, however, that in time of war they attained both military and economic importance. Whereas the important crossings at Holt and Chester were commanded by powerful castles, the fords, except that at Shotwick,[3] were undefended.[4] The extensive arrangements made for the lighting of beacons [5] in the Broxton Hundred during the revolt of Owen Glendower point to the possibility of crossing the Dee in a region where there were no bridges, and the appointment of men to be " keepers of the passes " [6] with power to seize all cattle brought from, or sold to, the rebels points to lucrative but illicit trading by way of the fords. Nor was such trade confined to fords, along the narrow, inland portion of the river. The estuary itself was crossed and considerable quantities of provisions passed from Wirral into North Wales.[7]

Below Warrington the Mersey was not forded. There were, however, two points at which communication with Lancashire could be maintained by means of ferries. One was at Birkenhead [8] and connected the Wirral with Liverpool. The other was at Runcorn.[9]

Roads from these ferries, from the fords and from the bridgeheads linked the various parts of the county with one another and especially with Chester. The state of these roads must remain largely a matter of conjecture. Dealing with English roads as a whole, Thorold Rogers

[1] In addition to numerous references to roads in documents relating to Cheshire, Gough's *Itinerary of Edward I* is useful.

[2] *Polychronicon*, II, 24. It is probable that the course of the Dee has varied a little during the lapse of centuries. An undated document in *Ancient Deeds*, Vol. VI, 335, refers to land " in a place called Wademade in the town of Caldecot, adjoining the old and present courses of the river Dee."

[3] See Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, 9-10.

[4] Except in time of war when some kind of guard was kept. For example certain lands at Crabwall (near Blacon) were held subject to the payment of one penny for all secular service " salva custodia vadi de Dee, sicut custodiri solet tempore guerrae "—Ormerod, II, 877.

[5] *Recog. Rolls*, 37, 55, 63, 68, 108, 117, 164, 211, 225, etc.

[6] *Ibid.*, 367.

[7] *Ibid.*, 253, 534.

[8] Mortimer, *The Hundred of Wirral*, 309, and *vide infra*, 76, *n.* 9.

[9] Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 163. See also *V.C.H. Lancashire*, Vol. III, 389; and *Lancashire Inquests*, Pt. II, 18.

argued that they were good,[1] while Dr. Cunningham implied that they were better in the fourteenth century than in the fifteenth.[2] Broad judgments based on evidence relating to the whole country are not necessarily applicable to a single county. On the other hand, the evidence available for a single county may be insufficient to support a broad judgment. In the case of Cheshire, while the evidence is not extensive, some interesting details are to be found concerning both the state of the roads and the character of the traffic.

The maintenance of the road surface within the towns was beginning to receive greater attention. Edward I no doubt realised the volume of traffic which passed along the roads of Cheshire when he granted to Nantwich and to Chester the right to levy tolls for the repair of their roads and bridges. Chester had a pavage of ½d. on every cartload of firewood and coals,[3] while at Nantwich a toll of ½d. was imposed on every cart laden with merchandise, but goods destined for the army in North Wales were to be exempt.[4] Outside the towns, however, stretches of bad road were probably so common as to escape mention. Occasional references to the " miry ways " by which men reach Chester,[5] to a road to Dutton rendered " impassable " by the overflow from a mill-pool,[6] to a man drowned in a stream while his horses and cart are saved,[7] to the fact that the road from Wirral to Frodsham is " greatly decayed," [8] point to what was probably the usual condition of the roads. Bridges similarly were not infrequently in an unsatisfactory state. The Dee Bridge fell several times in our period,[9] and in 1351 it was described as " in such a plight that no one can pass over it," [10] while in the same year floods carried away Northwich Bridge.[11]

It is not, however, to be assumed that the roads of Cheshire were universally in a bad condition. Exceptional conditions in limited areas may have led to efforts to maintain good roads. Such a conclusion is suggested by a study of the building accounts of Vale Royal Abbey,[12] which throw a good deal of light on transport in the middle of the county. The stone used in the building of this abbey was drawn from

[1] *Six Centuries* (14th edn.), 133-135. [2] *English Industry*, I, 450.

[3] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 311 (date 1279). This is not the first mention of paving at Chester. A letter of Henry III in 1246 ordered the mayor and others to have the town paved—*C.Cl.R.* (1242-1247), 423.

[4] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 233 (date 1277); (1281-1292), 25 (date 1282). The men of Nantwich also received a grant of pavage in 1328—*ibid.* (1327-1330) and a grant of pontage in 1332—*ibid.* (1330-1334), 378. Both grants were for five years. [5] *V.R.L. Book*, 42.

[6] *Ibid.*, 176. A grant of a fourth part of Goostrey mill contained a condition that the public way was not to be spoilt by the overflow of the mill pool.

[7] *Ibid.*, 81.

[8] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 13, item 24. Compare also two instances of streams being diverted to the detriment of the highways in *County Ct. Rolls*, 218.

[9] *Vide infra*, 81, 100-101. [10] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 14, item 33.

[11] Ibid., fol. 82. [12] *V.R.L. Book*, Appendix G, 192-231.

the quarries at Eddisbury, and although neither the exact site of the quarries nor the exact route taken can be determined, the distance from the quarries to the abbey must at a fair estimate have been from six to eight miles,[1] and the stone was hauled largely in one-horse carts. Now the use of single horses in the transport of such heavy material as stone is noteworthy, for many thousands of journeys were made. It becomes still more remarkable when it is seen that some of the carters managed to make two complete journeys—a distance of twenty-five and perhaps nearly thirty miles—every day for a month at a time.[2] Moreover, the hauling continued during November and December, when usually the roads would be soft. It is true that the district is fairly level ; it is possible that the loads were light ; it is probable that the work of transporting the stone was executed by men who possessed only one or two horses each. Yet it is scarcely credible that so much traffic could have been borne, or that horses could have endured the strain, unless the roads were in a tolerably good state of repair.

This argument, of course, applies only to a small area, and it is quite possible (though no records have survived) that the Master of the Works took measures to secure good roads for the conveyance not only of stone, but of timber and other building materials. In other parts of the county where the volume of traffic flowed more steadily, the roads were probably poor. They are mentioned whenever metes and bounds are defined.[3] Occasionally their course is the subject of an inquiry.[4] Then they are perambulated and the exact course is placed on record. Sometimes they give rise to a conflict between monasteries whose estates are contiguous.[5] Occasionally some reference is made to timber for the maintenance of roads and bridges, as when a hermit is supplied with oak from Delamere Forest for the repair of Stamford Bridge and Holmes Street.[6] Usually, however, the cost and process of repair escapes mention.

That the volume of traffic along these roads was considerable there

[1] Concerning the site and distance from the abbey, Rev. G. S. Payne, the present rector of Delamere, states : " The Eddisbury quarry lies about half a mile from Delamere Church near a place called ' the Old Pale,' and along the old Watling Street road (which runs parallel to the main road at this juncture, about a third of a mile from it). This Eddisbury quarry is a very old one. It is quite six miles from Vale Royal."

[2] See Appendix C, 173.

[3] E.g., *V.R.L. Book*, 143-144 ; Morris, *Chester*, 497.

[4] E.g., Northwich to Frodsham, *Deputy Keeper's Reports*, No. XXVIII, 47 ; Warrington to Northwich, *ibid.*, 55. There are many instances of diversion of paths or roadways, during the first half of the reign of Edward III (*ibid.*, No. XXVIII, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 48, 49; and Ormerod, II, 797, III, 495. For disputes about the road from Middlewich to Newcastle-under-Lyme see " Plea Rolls," Chester, 29/39, m. 3. For instructions to perambulate the road from Middlewich to Northwich, see " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 83, item 17.

[5] E.g., *Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey*, Vol. I, 532-533.

[6] *Recog. Rolls*, 110.

can be no doubt. The importance of the county as a natural highway to the north of England, to Ireland and to North Wales has already been mentioned. Wars in Wales hindered trade, but increased the traffic, for feudal levies, foot-soldiers and vehicles conveying provisions passed in large numbers through Chester, and although Edward's armies were in part supplied with sea-borne food,[1] they nevertheless depended on the provisions collected in the wagons of many religious houses and borne along the roads of Cheshire.[2]

During the peace which followed the settlement of Wales, the volume of traffic passing across the county was reduced. Peace, however, supplied the one condition requisite for the economic development both of North Wales and of Cheshire, and the land on both sides of the Dee became prosperous. Lead and coal from the mines of Flintshire were brought into Cheshire.[3] Welsh cattle were bought for the Macclesfield stud farm,[4] and Welsh troops marched through Cheshire to aid the king of England in his wars in Scotland and in France. The port of Chester continued to receive wine, wheat and other goods which were distributed to various parts of the county. Wool was conveyed both from North Wales and from Cheshire to east-coast ports.[5] Salt was conveyed from the Wiches, some of it even being sent to the armies on the Scottish border.[6] Loads of fuel were carried into Chester, and a considerable trade in provisions sprang up with Wales.[7] Moreover, a good deal of heavy building material was carried from the quarries, forests, lime-kilns and lead foundries, for the erection, extension or repair of the castles, abbeys and churches in the county.[8] Peace, therefore, though it depressed the military activities of the county, soon led to a wide use of communications for the normal purposes of a community which is advancing in prosperity.

Moreover, some of the monasteries dispensed hospitality for travellers. Stanlaw was remote from all roads, but Vale Royal was not far distant from the Watling Street; Combermere lay near the road from Chester to Shrewsbury, while St. Werburgh's abbey lay in Chester itself. Writing about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Lucian "wonders how the monks of Chester do not tire of their good humour. They are joyful to the men of the county, businesslike to travellers from afar. . . . The seats about their table are worn by reason of the many meals given to strangers; such is their innate liberality. . . . Here travellers to and from Ireland find rest, companionship and shelter while waiting for wind and tide." [9]

No such detailed picture of hospitality is found in the period under consideration. The few specific references point to the heavy expenses

[1] *Vide infra*, 79-81. [2] *Vide infra*, 80, 82. [3] *Vide infra*, 85.
[4] *Vide supra*, 54. [5] *Vide supra*, 47-48. [6] *Vide infra*, 112-113.
[7] *Vide infra*, 86, 125-6. [8] See Chapter VI, *passim*. [9] *Liber Luciani*, 58, 59.

incurred and indeed in some instances suggest an abuse of hospitality. In 1336, for example, the abbot of Vale Royal declares that out of a total income of £248 17s., his house spends £60 a year on "receiving guests and otherwise providing for the justices and other ministers of the lord of the country."[1] In 1351, the Black Prince informed the justice that "the abbeys of Chester, Combermere and Vale Royal are so excessively burdened by frequent visits of people of the country with grooms, horses and greyhounds . . . that their possessions hardly suffice for the maintenance of the small number of monks."[2] And in 1361 the Bishop of St. Davids mentions the daily coming and going at Vale Royal abbey of crowds of guests for whom it is necessary to provide food and drink."[3] It is likely enough that monastic hospitality was abused. It is certain that it was used.

Both oxen and horses were employed in Cheshire, as elsewhere, for haulage. Oxen, which of course were used for ploughing,[4] drew salt from the Wiches[5] and timber from the forests.[6] The size of the team naturally varied with the load. In one instance no less than twenty were hitched to a single wagon (belonging to the abbot of Vale Royal), engaged in conveying big beams from Delamere Forest to Chester Castle.[7] This, however, was exceptional. The teams commonly seen were much smaller, those mentioned in Domesday being "two or more."[8]

Horse teams similarly differed in size. Both victuals and merchandise were taken into Chester on horses' backs.[9] The stone used in the building of Vale Royal abbey was conveyed in one-horse and two-horse carts.[10] The baggage of Queen Eleanor and her maids was carried from Rhuddlan via Chester to Macclesfield in carts drawn by two-, three-, and four-horse teams.[11] Vehicles drawn by four horses conveyed timber from Delamere Forest to Chester Castle,[12] and a wagon belonging to the lord of Eaton made several journeys to Shirland and to London with nine horses.[13]

Moving along bad roads, the carts frequently needed repair, and the detailed costs of making new wheels, spokes, fellies and axle-trees are noted in the Bailiffs' or the Reeves' Accounts for some of the manors.[14] Iron tyres were costly and only used on the larger, stronger vehicles.[15]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 162.
[2] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 29.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 547-549.
[4] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. II (1307-1349), No. 2084.
[5] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 223.
[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 43.
[7] *Ibid.*, 80.
[8] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 223.
[9] Morris, *Chester* (*Doc.*), 561.
[10] *V.R.L. Book*, 198-203.
[11] Taylor, "A Flintshire Royal Princess," printed in the Flintshire Historical Society's Journal, 1914-1915, 92. Instances of carts conveying malt and corn drawn by two and by three horses are found in *County Ct. Rolls*, 153, 164.
[12] *Chamber. Accts.*, 80.
[13] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101.
[14] Ibid.; "Ministers' Accounts," 802/13; *Chamber. Accts.*, 191, 196.
[15] *Ibid.*, 82; *V.R.L. Book*, 81, 196.

Though advantageous for the preservation of the wheels, they were destructive to the road surface, and in Tudor times they were not allowed to cross the Dee Bridge or pass along the streets of Chester.[1]

Bad roads were only one of the hindrances to trade. An equal, if not greater menace to the transport of goods lay in the chronic disorder in the county. The safety of persons and goods passing along the roads was, in some measure, ensured by the sergeants of the earl of Chester and those of the lord of Halton. At times, however, these sergeants must have been powerless to cope with the lawless bands of men who made the county almost a byword for robbery. This chronic turbulence will be considered at length in a later chapter.[2] It is desirable here to deal with it only in so far as it affected the safety of communications.

Contemporary records abound in references to the dangerous state of Cheshire, though few specific instances of highway robbery are mentioned. Perhaps the most circumstantial is one which occurred during the Welsh Wars when a provision convoy, in charge of some men of Edmund, earl of Lancaster, was attacked as it passed along the Watling Street between Northwich and Chester. The robbers took away both the horses and carts, and although a commission of oyer and terminer was appointed, apparently they were not brought to justice.[3]

Failure to arrest the marauders probably accounts for the paucity of the recorded instances of robbery. The general state of the county, however, is not in doubt. "If you go a little way from Chester," says Lucian, ". . . the road on the left leads to a place called the Valley of Demons—so called because of the hiding-place of those who lie in it." And then to make his allegory clear beyond any doubt, he continues: "The wanderer on the left is despoiled by robbers."[4] Such was the state of Hoole Heath, less than a couple of miles from the city gate, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. At the close of the century, danger might still lurk in the neighbourhood of the city. In 1290 a certain Randle of Daresbury was indicted by a specially appointed jury for "raising pavilions outside Chester, causing malefactors to gather there, and stopping those who passed by to the terror of the people." A similar charge was brought against Geoffrey de Meols who was said to have raised a pavilion outside the north gate of Chester. In both instances, the men were convicted.[5] The dangers thus indicated were confined to no spot and to no period. "Old men say that the place where the monastery is now set was the dwelling-place of bandits," says the chronicler of Vale Royal abbey;[6] and a century later the marauders who sheltered in the forest of Wirral were

[1] Morris, *Chester*, 268, 276.
[2] See Chapter IX, 151-157.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 49.
[4] *Liber Luciani*, 64.
[5] *County Ct. Rolls*, 166, 167.
[6] *V.R.L. Book*, 7.

such a menace to the citizens of Chester that they petitioned the Black Prince to cause the region to be disafforested.[1] Indeed, large parts of the county became at times unsafe for peaceful trading. In 1318, for example, an armed gang took possession of the roads leading to Chester and robbed and maltreated all who passed by.[2] A letter patent of 20 Edward II to the justice of Chester, refers to "the large number of banished and outlawed persons now congregated in the woods, passes and other places of those parts," and to "the crimes committed by them and the confederacies whereby they escape arrest."[3] A proclamation of 1362 states that "bodies of armed men travelled the country (of Cheshire), committing felonies and trespasses,"[4] while in the reign of Richard II, commission after commission was appointed to arrest "disturbers of the peace," and "malefactors" who "wandered about the county to the terror of the inhabitants."[5]

Under such circumstances, the conveyance of food or merchandise along the roads of Cheshire was a hazardous operation, and it is a mark both of the dangers of the roads and of the importance of the great central market that additional measures were taken to ensure some degree of safety at certain points. Certain tenants of Longdendale were accustomed to "keep (or guard) the roads towards Chester markets,"[6] and a certain Urian de St. Pierre held the "passage" of Tarporley and Kelsall (where the high road emerges through a defile from Delamere Forest), by the service of "guarding the roads at the time of the markets of Chester."[7] A similar measure of protection was afforded at the passage of Lawton and Nantwich where an important highway from the south entered the county.[8] Since the passage of

[1] Cox, *Royal Forests*, 132. The charter of Edward III, confirming the disafforestation of Wirral, is printed (in English) in R. Stewart-Brown's *Disafforestation of Wirral*, 8.

[2] *C.P.R.* (1318-1323), 12.

[3] *Ibid.* (1324-1327), 350.

[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 93.

[5] *Ibid.*, 97, 128, 135, 137, 138, 160, 313, 497.

[6] "Harl." MS. 2115/109; "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3; *De Lacy Compoti*, 45, 60. There is apparently an error in *V.C.H. Lancashire*, Vol. II, 282, where Miss Alice Law, referring to these "roads towards Chester markets," infers that "definite attempts were made to *mend* the road for commercial purposes." The words in the above documents are "pro warde viarum" or "pro custodia viarum." Moreover, the *guarding* of roads towards market towns was not uncommon. Cf. *V.C.H. Derbyshire*, Vol. II, 256.

[7] *Cal. Inq. post mortem*, Vol. V, 136, 137; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. II, No. 256.

[8] *The passage of Lawton:* At Lawton the road from Newcastle-under-Lyme entered Cheshire and was divided into two branches, leading to Congleton and Macclesfield on the one hand, and to Middlewich and Northwich on the other. Ormerod says that Lawton Lidgate belonged to the earldom (*Cheshire*, III, 15). The farm of the passage varied greatly. In 1301-1302 it was 5 marks; in 1311, £4; in 1334-1335, £2 16s. 8d.; in 1347, £2 6s. 8d.; in 1350, £1 5s. By 1384-1385 it had risen again to £2. The passage was often designated the passage of "Lawton and Nantwich," and sometimes "Lawton and Huggebridge." (*Recog. Rolls*, 27, 58, 127, 227, 249, 282, 325, 358, 407, 512; *Chamber. Accts.*, 2, 250.)

Kelsall was valued at 3s., and the passage of Lawton was farmed (at various sums) it would appear that some form of toll was taken.

In spite of the dangers of the roads, a good deal of material of one kind or another was conveyed along the roads of Cheshire. In all ages a large proportion of the goods carried from one point to another is not of such a nature as to excite attack. Building material, fencing material and fuel may be allowed to pass through the most lawless regions. Usually it is only the transport of specie, valuable merchandise or food that provokes men to plunder.

Specie was, in fact, often conveyed from Chester, doubtless with reasonable precautions for its safety. The incidents, however, escape mention save in the later years of the reign of Edward II, when both the mode and cost of conveyance are specifically included in the Chamberlains' Accounts. The money was placed on horses' backs, each horse carrying about £100 and being led by a groom, while the Chamberlain himself and one esquire were in charge of the party. When the sum of £520 was conveyed thus from Chester to London (in 1325-1326), the guard consisted of eight footmen and twelve horsemen, six of whom were sent back when the party had reached Lichfield.[1] In the same year £400 carried from Chester to Kenilworth was guarded by eight horsemen and twelve footmen,[2] while a further sum of £210 taken to the same place had a guard of six horsemen and six footmen.[3] In the *Chamberlains' Accounts* for the year, he states that " the way was then dangerous," and in reckoning his expenses for a similar escort which guarded the sum of £340 from Chester to Woodstock, he states that " the way was then very dangerous." [4] The condition of the roads was not, however, always so dangerous as to necessitate a strong guard. When two considerable sums were conveyed to London and to Kennington in 1342-1343, the only expenses claimed are those of two men.[5]

The exact cost of conveying these sums of money is stated in the *Chamberlains' Accounts*. It is, however, difficult to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion respecting the general cost of transport in mediæval Cheshire. Thorold Rogers considered that the cost of carrying heavy goods by land was about 1d. per ton per mile, whenever the journey backwards and forwards could be accomplished within a single day.[6] There are abundant records of the carrying of heavy goods in Cheshire, but almost invariably some factor material to a calculation is omitted. The cost of transport is included in the price of goods ; or costs and prices are grouped together and only the total charge is stated ; or (more often) the weight is omitted. Pales for example were conveyed

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 97. [2] *Ibid.*, 97-98. [3] *Ibid.*, 98.
[4] *Ibid.*, 98. [5] *Ibid.*, 117.
[6] *Six Centuries* (14th edn. 1919), 134.

from Eulowe to Shotwick at a charge of 9s. 6d. per thousand, but the weight of timber or number of journeys needed is not stated.[1] Even when a complete and precise statement is made, the reader may have some doubts as to its exact significance. For example in 1353 one carat and eight feet of lead were carried from Chester to Rhuddlan at a cost of seven shillings,[2] but the weight of lead in "a carat and eight feet" is, in some measure, a matter of conjecture.[3]

A simple and fairly accurate statement of the cost of transport (and incidentally of the earnings of carters) can, however, be expressed in terms of horse-teams and days' work. Some royal baggage was conveyed from Rhuddlan via Chester to Macclesfield[4]—a distance of about seventy miles—in 1283 and the pay accounts indicate that the seven carts used were paid for as follows :—

Carts with 4 horses . 6s.
,, ,, 3 ,, . 4s. 4d. and 4s. 8d.
,, ,, 2 ,, . 3s. 4d.

The document refers to the period for which the carts were hired as four days. This is apparently the time taken on the outward journey. If we assume that the return journey with empty carts was made in two and a half or three days, the carters' earnings work out thus :—

Cart with 4 horses, about 9d. a day.
,, ,, 3 ,, ,, $7\frac{1}{2}$d. ,,
,, ,, 2 ,, ,, 6d. ,,

This calculation is based on the expenses of a single episode, but there is a large body of evidence to support the view that in the reign of Edward I, a Cheshire carter with two horses might earn 6d. a day.[5] The building accounts of Vale Royal abbey deal with the transport of

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 215. For a further instance of cartage of pales see "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32. [2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 215.

[3] The weights of a "carretate of lead in the Peak," and a "carretate of London" are dealt with in *V.C.H. Derbyshire*, Vol. II, 324. The values but not the weights of carats and feet of lead are stated in Thorold Rogers' *Hist. Agriculture*, II, 531-533.

[4] Taylor, "A Flintshire Royal Princess," in Flintshire Historical Society's Journal, 1914-1915, 92.

[5] Where the number of horses used is greater than two, the evidence is not so clear. For example, in 1312-1313, four carters hauling timber in *four-horse* carts from Delamere Forest to Chester Castle received 12d. a day (*Chamber. Accts.*, 80). The use of such teams was, however, much rarer than that of two-horse teams, and it is probable that no well-defined rate of payment was current for larger teams. In 8-9 Edward II, a number of horses and carts were hired for the hay harvest at Frodsham at 4d. a day, but whether one or two horses per cart were used is not stated, "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12. In 31-32 Edward III, a carter using his own horse (or horses) and cart for carting oats received 6d. a day—"Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 5.

a very large quantity of stone from quarries to the site of the abbey during the years 1278 to 1280,[1] and since these accounts throw light on several aspects of the subject under discussion, they may be treated at some length. Carrying proceeded during the greater part of the year, but the number of carters engaged varied according to the season. Carting was suspended during the greater part of August and October and very little was done in May. At other times, however, the work continued fairly steadily, the number of carters varying from thirty to about sixty and reaching seventy-three in November and December of the first year.[2]

As more than thirty-five thousand cart loads of stone were carried during the three years, there is considerable material for forming a judgment. In no case, however, is there any statement of the weight of stone carried. Carters were always paid by the journey according to the number of horses they were using, and throughout the three years, the greater part of the transport was effected in one-horse carts, making one or two journeys a day.

Pay-days were not frequent, and after the first seven months, the number of days' work for which payment was made was always a round number (thirty, forty or sixty). Throughout this period, individual carters made the same number of journeys every day. This number would appear to depend only partially on the season of the year. Two journeys per day were made as commonly in November and December as in July. It seems probable that contracts were accepted for, say, forty or eighty loads at a time, and that a carter was then committed to one load or two loads per day for forty days.

At the beginning of the work, when few men were engaged in carting, the price paid per one-horse load was 3d. After three months' time it fell to 2½d., and after another four months, to 2d. At this figure it remained throughout the remainder of the three years. A carter with one horse might, therefore, earn 2d. or 4d. a day, and the number of working days (for carters) in the three years was 208, 240 and 200 respectively. None of the men, however, were occupied in carting stone on the maximum number of working days. Indeed, only a few were occupied for more than half that time. Simon, son of Alexander, for example, was engaged in carting stone during the first year on sixty-eight days, making forty-two journeys at 3d. a journey, and fifty at 2½d. a journey.

In July of the first year a few two-horse carts were employed in carting stone, the price per journey being 3d., and in a few cases 3½d. It was possible, therefore, for a carter with two horses to earn 6d. to 7d. a day, and since this figure remained constant for two and a half years and covered some seven thousand journeys, it may be considered an accurate statement of the cost of transport in two-horse vehicles.

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 198-203.

[2] See Appendix C, 173 *et seq.*

The work of conveying this stone was evidently largely carried out by men who lived in the neighbourhood. Unlike the labourers and plasterers they could not devote themselves wholly to the building operations. They were not professional carters. The majority of them were poor men who had only one horse, and devoted themselves to carting when they could spare time from their agricultural work. The money they earned would be very welcome, but the figures quoted above need to be slightly discounted because of the long delay before payment was received. As the work progressed, pay-days became less and less frequent, till in the third year payment was made for one hundred and twenty (working) days at once.[1]

With the exception of boats in the estuarine portion of the Dee, there was very little water-borne traffic in mediæval Cheshire. Above Chester, the Dee is of moderate depth, not too rapid in its current and not more subject than other rivers to floods. Its banks are neither precipitous nor marshy. A causeway at Chester prevented continuous navigation, but since it must have helped to maintain the depth of the water above the city, it would aid navigation in the middle course of the river. There were many fishing boats on the Dee both above and below Chester bridge,[2] and some of these may have been used for transport. There are, however, only scanty references to traffic on the river, and it is probable that the traffic was very little. The reason for this is to be found in the nature of the country through which it flows. In Wales its course is rapid and its bed rocky. At no point is it navigable, and at no point was there any town of importance. Having reached the plain it flows across the march of Wales, a region not unfertile, but subject to such frequent raids that no considerable village was found anywhere along its course. A Cistercian abbey had been founded at Poulton and might, under happier circumstances, have become the nucleus of a settlement. But Welsh incursions had rendered the site unsafe, and the convent had been removed (in 1214) to Dieulacres in North Staffordshire.[3] There was, therefore, little occasion for traffic in the middle course of the Dee, and beyond an occasional quantity of timber sent down from Overton to Chester[4] (even this may have floated down), there is no certainty of any other goods having been borne along the river.

The basin of the Mersey, though immune from border raids, was

[1] See Appendix C, 173.

[2] Boats belonged to the prioress of Chester (Morris, *Chester*, 139); St. Giles' Hospital, Boughton (*ibid.*, 156); Robert de Eton (2) (*ibid.*, 501); the abbot of Dieulacres (*Chartulary of Dieulacres*—Wm. Salt, Archæological Society, Vol. IX, N.S.); as well as the ferry boat. In addition to his two boats on the Dee, Robert de Eton had also a ferry boat at Eaton (Ormerod, II, 832).

[3] Dugdale, *Monasticon* (ed. 1849), Vol. V, 628.

[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 42.

almost as sparsely populated as that of the Dee. A large area on both sides of the river consisted of low-lying, marshy land, quite unsuitable for cultivation. On the Lancashire side a town had arisen at the only bridge, namely, Warrington, and a little town was beginning to grow at Liverpool. But a great part of the Cheshire bank was a strip of waste and there was scarcely a settlement of any importance overlooking the waters. A small vill at Runcorn lay at the foot of the rocky eminence opposite Widnes. Ince stood on a low hill that rises from several miles of marsh. Stanlaw abbey stood in a lonely, barren spot on the water's edge till recurring floods [1] rendered it uninhabitable and the monks quitted it for Whalley.[2] At Birkenhead was a small priory.

These few settlements could scarcely have occasioned any water-borne traffic. There was, however, one considerable vill near the Mersey, namely Frodsham. Sheltered under the abrupt rock in which the range of sandstone hills terminates, standing on the highway between Chester and Warrington, close to the bridge across the Weaver, it had grown into a populous manor and was the possession of the earl of Chester. It is properly on the Weaver rather than on the Mersey, but it is only three miles from the confluence. Frodsham is the only place on the Cheshire bank designated a "port" in mediæval records, and ships coming to Frodsham of course came along the Mersey. In 1280 the profits arising from the tolls of ships coming into the port were valued at £10 per annum.[3] These ships were principally those of Irish merchants bringing cargoes of grain.[4]

Occasionally, therefore, a small merchant vessel passed up the Mersey to Frodsham. Occasionally the duke of Lancaster's eight-oared barge was rowed along its waters.[5] A few boats put into the little port of Liverpool [6] and Edward II sailed up the river from Liverpool to Ince.[7] Some boats may have put in at Tranmere.[8] Ferry boats plied between Birkenhead and Liverpool.[9] But for the most part, the waters of the Mersey bore very little traffic.

[1] *Ann. Cest.*, 106; Mortimer, *Hundred of Wirral*, 259.

[2] Dugdale, *Monasticon*, V, 644. The removal was effected after much delay in 1294.

[3] Ormerod, II, 50.

[4] *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1349), No. 53.

[5] Beamont, *An Account of the Rolls of the Honour of Halton*, 42.

[6] In the reign of Edward III, Liverpool was used as a port of embarkation for troops. Picton, *Liverpool Municipal Records*, 12, 15.

[7] Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 40.

[8] Ormerod, II, 451. Richard Starkey, in 27 Edward III, claimed to have boats in the Mersey "to fish and to carry . . . to all manner of lands being in the place of the lord the King."

[9] *The Birkenhead Ferry*. Letters patent of Edward II indicate that a ferry was in existence between Birkenhead and Liverpool in 1318, and grant the prior and convent of Birkenhead licence to construct houses for the accommodation of travellers and the sale of provisions. (*C.P.R.* (1317-1321), 108.) The right of ferry-

Cheshire, therefore, had little water-borne traffic—less, indeed, than the existence of such waterways as the Mersey, the Weaver and the Dee might lead one to expect—but where settlements are few and population is sparse, there is little occasion for river traffic.

As for the roads, there was little to distinguish Cheshire from the neighbouring counties or indeed from England as a whole. A few well-defined routes converged on certain market-towns, the chief of which was Chester. Bridges were few. Roads were dangerous. Turbulence in a greater or less degree was chronic. Trade could not develop freely. The community was, however, accustomed to such conditions and endured them.

Lawlessness was probably a more serious menace to communications in Cheshire than in the neighbouring counties, but from the point of view of road-surface, Cheshire was no more backward than her neighbours. Indeed in the light of the dates of pavage charters, she was well ahead of them. The earliest recorded pavage charter of Liverpool [1] was granted in 1329, fifty years later than that of Chester, and the moneys raised for pavage at Wigan, Warrington, Liverpool, Preston and Lancaster at a still later date were misappropriated.[2] Nor were the towns of Staffordshire enabled to impose tolls for the paving of their streets so early as were Nantwich and Chester (viz., 1277 and 1279). The earliest grants of pavage for the chief Staffordshire towns are as follows: Stafford, 1295; [3] Lichfield, 1299; [4] Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1302.[5]

In this respect, at least, Cheshire was ahead of her neighbours, but the progress thus indicated was due to her geographical position in relation to Wales rather than to her economic development.

age from Birkenhead to Liverpool was conferred on the priory in 4 Edward III. (Mortimer, *Hundred of Wirral*, 310.) In 1354 in answer to a *quo warranto* the prior stated the charges thus:

Man and horse laden or not laden	2d.
Man on foot	½d.
On Saturday (Liverpool market day) man . .	½d.
On Saturday (Liverpool market day) man and baggage	1d.

(Mortimer, *op. cit.*, 310.) These charges were deemed excessive. (*Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Society*, Vol. 42, 146.)

There had been a complaint of excessive charge in 1318, when the jurors of Wirral stated before the Justice of Chester that "Richard Praty, 'formon' of Liverpool, takes a passage toll which is unjust and beyond due measure, for where by law he ought to take a farthing, he requires a penny for the crossing between Lyverpul and the county of Chester." *Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Society*, Vol. 71, 89. The value of the ferry in 1 Edward III was stated to be 40s. a year. *Lancashire Inquests*, Part II, 224.

[Since the above was written, Mr. R. Stewart-Brown has treated the subject at length in "The Priory of Birkenhead and the Mersey Ferry."]

[1] Picton, *Liverpool Municipal Records*, 10.
[2] *C.P.R.* (1340-1343), 313.
[3] *Ibid.* (1292-1301), 144.
[4] *Ibid.*, 408.
[5] *Ibid.* (1301-1307), 69.

CHAPTER V.

WALES.

During the early years of the period under consideration, the condition of North Wales underwent a decisive change: the principality was conquered and became part of the dominions of the English king. The consequences for Cheshire were far reaching, and it is the purpose of this chapter to consider, first, the economic aspect of the wars in so far as they affected Cheshire at the time, and secondly, the new relationship between Cheshire and Wales brought about by peace.

The conquest of Wales has been so frequently regarded as an episode in the expansion of English political power that its economic significance is usually overlooked. Similarly, the existence of the palatine earldom of Chester has been so repeatedly explained as a bulwark against the Welsh that its *raison d'être* has been assumed to be purely military. That its establishment was a military answer to a military problem is undoubted, but this does not account for the existence of the problem; the motive of Welsh attacks needs explanation. That national pride resented English encroachments, that it occasionally aimed at expansion is clear. There was, however, a more permanent factor which is almost invariably overlooked, namely, the deficiency of food in Wales.

The mountains of North Wales afforded an admirable breeding ground for sheep, and the valleys for cattle, but the area suitable for corn-growing was very limited. Anglesey had extensive corn lands, and enjoyed comparative peace, but the mainland was almost wholly unadapted to wheat growing. Among a people hemmed in on the one side by the sea, and pressed by the English on the other, there was a tendency to over-population. This insufficiency in the supply of food affords a key both to Welsh aggressions,[1] and to the repeated failure of English kings to conquer Wales.[2] It was perhaps the biggest problem confronting Edward I in his operations in North Wales.

[1] Cf. *Liber Luciani*, 52: "The neighbouring Welsh . . . forced by hunger approach the city (Chester) and compare the food (supplies)."

[2] Cf. *Brut y Tywysogion*, 203 (Henry II in the mountains of Berwyn): "And when provisions had failed him, he removed his tents and his army to the open plains of England." And again (King John at Dyganwy): "And there the army was in so great want of provisions that an egg was sold for a penny halfpenny; and it was a delicious feast to them to get horseflesh, and on that account the King returned to England . . . with his errand imperfect." *Ibid.*, 267-268.

A further difficulty in the way of conquest lay in the dense woods which in many places covered the lower slopes of the mountains, affording refuge for the defenders,[1] and rendering movement and especially transport very difficult for the invader.[2] This also challenged the resourcefulness of Edward I.

The king's ability was, however, equal to the problem. The wars witnessed no great military incidents, but afforded scope for organisation on a large scale, and indeed the conquest was the fruit of organisation rather than of fighting.

The peace made at Shrewsbury in 1267 was kept for several years. Llewellyn had reason for satisfaction, for the terms had been generous and he had been recognised as overlord of all the Welsh magnates. He sent his tribute periodically to Chester, where it was stored temporarily in the abbey of St. Werburgh,[3] but under one pretext or another, he failed to do homage to Edward, even when Edward journeyed specially to Chester. Three Cheshire men were sent, therefore, to summon Llewellyn to appear before the king at Westminster three weeks after Michaelmas to do homage and fealty.[4] Edward showed great patience, but when Llewellyn delayed still longer, and sent to the French court for Eleanor de Montfort, he at last began to prepare for war.

By November, 1276, the council had discussed the question of Llewellyn's homage and determined upon a "national war upon Wales."[5] Three things were necessary before there could be any large scale operations in North Wales. Large supplies of food had to be procured, roads had to be made, and some fortifications established on the Dee estuary. It is a mark of Edward's foresight and capacity that he organised the means requisite for these ends.

As early as October, 1276, arrangements were made for the importation of Irish corn into Chester. War was not mentioned, but the purpose was clearly foreshadowed. None of this corn was to be allowed to pass into Wales "as the king has need to obtain more corn than usual this year for the munition of Chester castle, and others of the county have need of more corn than usual for their maintenance."[6] From this time onward, repeated orders were sent to Ireland for foodstuffs

[1] Cf. Higden, "Woodes be to theym as for towres" (*Polychronicon*, I, 395). "The woods in Wales were i-hewe adown, that were great socour to men of the contrey to hyde him self in werre tyme." *Ibid.*, VIII, 282.

[2] Cf. also *Brut y Tywysogion*, 187, where Henry II was intercepted "in the trackless wood" by the sons of Owen.

[3] *C.P.R.* (1266-1272), 123, 175, 299, 302, 306, 370 . . . *Ibid.* (1272-1281), 42. The amount in the last quoted instance was "3000 marks for Christmas term, 1 Edward I." It may be noted that the abbey had also been used as a treasury for money sent from Ireland. *C.Cl.R.* (1247-1251), 437, 501.

[4] The men were the Abbot of Vale Royal, Thomas de Meynewarin and Adam de Dutton. *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 104.

[5] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 114.

[6] *C.Cl.R.* (1272-1279), 314.

to be conveyed to Chester or the Dee estuary.[1] In February, 1277, the king ordered 600 quarters of wheat and 1000 quarters of oats to be sent before June 24th.[2] In May he sent word to the Irish merchants that he would be in need of victuals and other necessaries, and promised speedy payment if they would bring them to Chester.[3] By August he was in great need of supplies, and merchants both of Ireland and of Chester were encouraged to bring corn from Ireland to the Dee estuary.[4]

As the summer advanced, Edward turned to English sources for supplies. In July buyers were sent out from Chester to purchase grain in the counties of Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Warwick, Worcester, Oxford, Staffordshire and Salop. At the same time, the religious houses in each of these counties were requested to assist the buyers by lending their carts and carriages for the conveyance of the grain to Chester at the king's cost.[5] Arrangements were also made for the purchase and carriage to Chester of large quantities of wine.[6]

While supplies were thus being conveyed through Cheshire, it is not clear that Edward requisitioned either corn or transport in the county itself. It is possible that the supplies available in the county were small, for little corn was grown there. It is probable, however, that the omission of Cheshire was intentional, and that a proportion of the county's supplies was used in the king's service, for during July, August and September he was travelling continually in and out of the county, staying now at Chester Castle, now at one of the religious houses, or at one of their manors.[7]

While the king journeyed to and fro between Rhuddlan, Flint, Basingwerk and Cheshire, woodcutters opened a broad road through the forest, and a fortified base was constructed at Flint on the bank of the Dee. For the latter purpose "enormous quantities of timber were brought chiefly by sea from Chester, together with ammunition and supplies, and there was a great train of carters who had been impressed for the king's service, but were paid."[8] The work was pressed on with

[1] Before Henry III made his attack in North Wales in 1241, "letters were sent to Ireland asking for supplies of wine, wheat, flour and bacon." Hilda Johnstone, "A year in the Life of King Henry III," in the *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1924, 329.

[2] *Cal. of Documents Relating to Ireland* (1252-1284), 245.

[3] *Ibid.*, 250. [4] *Ibid.*, 254, 255. *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 190, 224, 227.

[5] *Ibid.*, 219. Edward used the wagons of religious houses also in his Scotch wars. Cf. Speight, *Upper Wharfedale*, 302.

[6] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 226, 228, 212. See also *ibid.*, 274.

[7] He stayed at Birkenhead Priory, at Darnhall (the earlier house of the Vale Royal convent) and at Stanlaw abbey; at Ince and Bromborough (manors of St. Werburgh's abbey) and at Wallerscoat (a manor of St. Mary's abbey, Chester). He was also present at the great gathering at the foundation of Vale Royal abbey in August, 1277, and he stayed at some of the above places again in the summer of 1278. See Gough's *Itinerary of Edward I.*

[8] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 130.

all speed, the abbot and convent of Chester sending a hundred workmen at their own cost to help.[1]

Having organised supplies and communications and secured a base on the Dee estuary, Edward advanced to Rhuddlan and thence to Conway, blockaded Llewellyn in Snowdon and forced him to submit.

The peace that followed was not, however, final, for hostilities were recommenced in 1282. In the interval the Dee bridge collapsed, snapping the central link in the communications between England and Wales. It was a wooden structure ; it had borne an unusual volume of heavy traffic during the war, and a very high tide washed it away.[2] From both the military and the economic point of view it was imperative that it should be rebuilt immediately. Edward, therefore, urged the citizens to complete the work at their own cost. The citizens in reply pleaded, with justice, that the county, and not the city, was liable for the repair of the bridge,[3] but in the ensuing conflict the citizens were obliged to accept the common law of England.[4]

When the war was renewed in 1282, the conditions governing an advance into Wales were the same as in 1277. The fortifications at Flint had been completed, and even during the full tide of Welsh success the garrison held out, but it was again necessary to push forward good roads, and to organise supplies of food on a large scale. Bodies of woodcutters receiving a wage of 3d. a day, were, therefore, summoned to Chester,[5] and provisions were again poured into the city and the Dee estuary. Agents were sent to Ireland, to Scotland, to Gascony and to Ponthieu [6] to procure supplies, and the ships of the Cinque Ports were used for transport. Wheat and oats were brought by sea from places as far south as Winchester,[7] and quantities of herring and other fish were bought.[8] Some conception of the quantity of provisions required, may be gained from the orders sent to the justiciar of Ireland in April, 1282, for

[1] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 226. Edward granted that this should not be drawn into a precedent. The abbot had also lent his carts for transport, and this also was not to become a precedent. " Harl." MS. 2071/62.

[2] *Ann. Cest.*, 106 (date 1279). Morris says that the date was 1280. *Chester*, 16, 19.

[3] " Ad murum civitatis et pontem reaedificandos de unaquaque hida comitatus unum hominem venire praepositus edicebat," *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 84, and see *ibid.*, 37.

[4] But the abbot of Chester maintained his exemption. " Harl." MS. 2071/89. Concerning the Dee bridge at Chester, *vide infra*, 100-101.

[5] One hundred fellers came from the Forest of Dean, *C.Cl.R.* (1313-1318), 146-147 (dealing with some old debts). The sheriff of Lancashire was ordered to provide two hundred woodcutters. Baines, *History of the County Palatine of Lancashire*, Vol. I, 259.

[6] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 155.

[7] Cf. also *Cal. of Chancery Rolls*, 262, 267, 270 (wine and victuals for the army).

[8] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 24.

2000 quarters of wheat.
4000 ,, ,, oats.
400 ,, ,, peas and beans.
500 ,, ,, barley.
600 tuns of wine.
1000 salted salmon.

These, together with a quantity of cheese and salted meat, were to be forwarded to Chester with all speed.[1] Other supplies came by land, and once (at least) as the provision convoy lumbered along the Watling Street between Northwich and Chester, it was attacked by men who assaulted the drivers and seized both the men and the goods.[2]

The wholesale commandeering of food for military purposes led to a great scarcity in Cheshire. Even in peace time, the county was not self-sufficing. War now intensified the shortage and it became necessary, first, to grant exemption from the demands of the king's purveyors, and secondly, to licence and facilitate the importation of corn from Ireland and elsewhere.

In June, the king granted the abbot of Combermere that his corn, carts and horses should not be taken against his will for the army in Wales.[3] In June and October, the prior of Norton received letters safeguarding him against the king's purveyors till the October of the following year.[4] In December, however, the king was in such straits that he wrote to all the religious houses in Cheshire, pointing out his great need of transport for the provisioning of his army in Wales, and ordered the abbots and priors to send all their carts and every man they could spare, to be at Chester early in January.[5]

By this time the stocks of corn in Cheshire had been very seriously diminished. The abbot of Combermere protested that his remaining supplies were insufficient for the maintenance of the monks, and notwithstanding the king's needs, he procured immunity for his corn, victuals and wagons.[6] Even the rich abbot of Chester obtained immunity for his corn, though the protection may have been as much a mark of royal favour as of real need.[7]

In their difficulties the abbots turned to Ireland for supplies. As early as December, 1276, the abbot of Darnhall had obtained the royal licence to purchase corn there for his convent.[8] In 1278 he sent an agent there to buy corn and other victuals,[9] and in 1279, another agent

[1] *Cal. of Chancery Rolls—Welsh Rolls* (1277-1326), 214.
[2] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 49.
[3] *Cal. of Chancery Rolls—Welsh Rolls* (1277-1326), 225.
[4] *Ibid.*, 223, 241. Similar protection was given to the parson of Astbury.
Ibid., 223. [5] *Ibid.*, 277. [6] *Ibid.*, 264-265. [7] *Ibid.*
[8] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 185. Darnhall was the original site of the convent which settled at Vale Royal.
[9] *Cal. Doc. Relating to Ireland* (1252-1284), 275.

went abroad to purchase one hundred tuns of wine and other goods for the abbey.[1] The abbot of Stanlaw followed his example. In March, 1283, he secured a licence to buy corn and victuals in Ireland for the maintenance of his house.[2] A month later he gained permission to bring to England one ship-load of corn provided none of it were taken to the Welsh.[3] Similarly the abbot of Chester both in 1282 and 1283 sent his agents abroad to buy provisions.[4]

The war ended, as is well known, in the conquest of Llewellyn's principality, the establishment of English rule throughout North Wales, and the close administrative connection of Flintshire with the earldom of Chester. Cheshire's greatest contribution to the war was not economic, but military. It had borne the brunt of Welsh attacks since the days of the Conqueror. Its men had played the principal part in the advance of the Anglo-Norman power, and it was fitting that in this, the culminating episode, they should still play a leading part. Their contribution is summarised in another chapter.[5] It is only necessary to state here that the withdrawal from civil toil of so large a proportion of its manhood as Cheshire sent, is itself a matter of economic importance.

In addition to its supply of men, the county had supplied wagons and corn up to the limit of its capacity—or, indeed, beyond that limit, for it had been obliged to import food. Moreover, it had been the busy scene of converging traffic. Horseman and footman, woodcutter and provision convoy had come from many directions into Chester, and passed over the Dee bridge into Wales, while the Dee estuary had been busy with the ships which supplied Edward's armies, or made good the deficiencies in the granaries and storehouses of Cheshire.

Complete peace was not yet attained. There were serious risings in 1287 and in 1294-1295, and there were occasional minor disturbances till a century later Owen Glendower once more had the principality in arms against England. At each outbreak the men of Cheshire were mobilised and marched to the scene of hostilities. Throughout the fourteenth century the castles at Beeston and Chester, Flint and Rhuddlan were regularly repaired and kept ready for any emergency.[6]

But risings grew less frequent and less serious. The work of 1282-1283 had been the beginning of the end. A new era was dawning in North Wales and Cheshire. The men of both regions were acquiring a new outlook. Their energies were being turned into new channels, and within a few years Cestrian and Welshman were fighting side by side.

[1] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281).
[2] *Ibid.* (1281-1292), 59.
[3] *Ibid.*, 236.
[4] *Cal. Chancery Rolls—Welsh Rolls*, 268.
[5] Chapter IX, pp. 157-158.
[6] *Vide infra*, 97-99.

Peace was advantageous to both peoples. It could not solve the economic problems overhanging North Wales and Cheshire, but it eliminated one factor which for more than two centuries had complicated those problems. Moreover, it gave the English crown a direct interest in encouraging the growth of towns, and in developing the material resources of the conquered region.

The close association of Cheshire with the region immediately contiguous in Wales was not broken by Edward's division of North Wales into shires. The new county of Flintshire had the name but hardly the status of an independent shire,[1] for the sheriff of Flint was subordinate to the justice of Chester, and the revenues of Flintshire were paid into the exchequer of Chester. With this close political relationship grew an economic relationship which was not confined to the region within the new county's boundaries, but stretched southward into the region which has since become the southern portion of Denbighshire.[2]

Deductive argument would lead to the conclusion, that the products of the hills were exchanged for the products of the plain, since in respect of surface the two regions are largely complementary. The conclusion is only partly true, for Cheshire produced no surplus of grain, though grain might, and did, pass by way of Cheshire into Wales. On the other hand, the hill pastures of Wales were a source of food for the Cestrians. Sheep and cattle were driven into the county [3] and some were taken as far east as Macclesfield.[4] Nor did war entirely stop the traffic. Indeed, the first item in the list of dues levied at the Bridgegate of Chester was "one beast from every lot taken as booty in time of war between Cestrians and the Welsh." [5] Moreover, war put a premium on illicit trading. During the Glendower rebellion, when all trade with the Welsh was prohibited, and only occasional licences were issued for the removal of cattle from North Wales, cattle were brought into the western hundreds of Cheshire and sold, in spite of repeated orders to the bailiffs of the hundreds to stop the trading.[6]

Another factor of increasing importance lay in the development of the mineral deposits of Flintshire. Already coal, lead and iron were being worked. The coal was mined at Eulowe and Buckley,[7] and further

[1] Tout, *Flintshire: Its History and Records*, 21.

[2] I.e., the region round Wrexham. (Denbigh was created a county in 1536.)

[3] Welsh cattle and horses were brought also to Whitchurch (Salop) which stands about a mile from the boundary of Cheshire. *Registrum Epistolarum J. Peckham* II, xlviii, and II, 455.

[4] *Vide supra*, 54.

[5] Morris, *Chester* (*Doc.*), 557.

[6] For licences, etc., see *Recog. Rolls*, 224, 414. For orders to seize cattle, etc., *ibid.*, 13, 255, 273, 333, 340, 437. In one instance a number of men deserted the king's army in North Wales, and brought with them a very large quantity of cattle and sheep which passed eastward across Cheshire by way of Winsford bridge. *Ibid.*, 279.

[7] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, xliii, 63, 76, 91. Leases of the coal mines in Flintshire occur in *Recog. Rolls*, 40, 129, 176, 177, 259, 260, 266, 343, 361, 374, 381, 388, 441, 535. *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 181.

south at Hope.[1] It was used at the castles for forging iron [2] and was apparently brought into Chester both by land [3] and by water.[4] Cheshire, therefore, was able to use coal at a comparatively early date although no coal was yet worked within the county itself.[5]

The centre of the lead mining was Holywell [6] where an industry, though less advanced than that of Derbyshire, was growing important. In 1283 the abbot of Vale Royal was appointed to the custody of these mines with power to take fuel from certain neighbouring woods "for the making of lead or other metal." [7] The mines were farmed during the fourteenth century,[8] and an inquiry in 1312 touching the advisability of extending the workings, showed that the annual profits varied between nothing and £15.[9] Some of the metal was founded at Chester,[10] and some in Flintshire.[11] It was in demand not only for the roofing of castles, abbeys and manors, but also for the pans used in the Cheshire salt industry.

Another rising industry centred round the iron deposits at Eulowe,[12] and a smaller iron mine in the forest of Rusty.[13] Efforts were also made (though with less success at this period) to gain copper at Dyserth.[14]

The mining activity, the trading in cattle and the growth of the towns, led to prosperity and was of great importance to Cheshire as well as to Flintshire. Between Madoc's rebellion and the ascendancy of Owen Glendower stretches a century of peace ruffled only by occasional waves of disaffection. During this period the conquest was bearing fruit, the changed circumstances were proving beneficial. It is true that the people of Flintshire had little reason to love English rule, that the government of their county was centred at Chester, that the officials were for many years Englishmen, that the towns were

[1] *Recog. Rolls*, 441. [2] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 36; *Chamber. Accts.*, 43.
[3] Morris, *Chester*, 276.
[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 102, 109, 112, 121, 161, 208, 224, 238, 249, 263. The word used is, of course, "sea coal," but as the entries invariably occur under the head of prisage, it is clear that the coal came by water. It is not, however, clear that it came from Wales.
[5] The earliest entry of sea coals in the *Chamber. Accts.* occurs in 1326-1327 (p. 102), but it is probable that coal was used in Cheshire at an earlier date. A grant of pavage on "every cart load of firewood and coals" entering Chester (1279) probably refers to charcoal as the word used is "carbones" simply—*C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 311. Mr. Henry Taylor has, however, shown that the Romans used at Chester "coal of the same kind as that which crops up to the surface both at Flint and Mostyn," *Cheshire Sheaf*, 1891, 22-23.
[6] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, xliii, 9. [7] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 69.
[8] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 64; *Recog. Rolls*, 17, 37, 151, 213, 216, 229, 230.
[9] *Deputy Keeper's Reports*, XXVII, 101. [10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 43.
[11] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, XLIII.
[12] *Ibid.*, XLIII; *Chamber. Accts.*, 6. [13] *Recog. Rolls*, 428.
[14] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, Appendix 95, 96. Four German miners were brought at great expense to smelt some ore in the hope of getting copper. They failed, whereupon a local miner used the ashes left and obtained lead.

filled with Englishmen, or with Welshmen favourable to the English cause.[1] Nevertheless, English rule had brought peace and promoted material prosperity.

Moreover, a large part of the products of the new shire came into Cheshire. The two sides of the Dee basin were being knit into an economic whole and Cheshire men were playing the leading parts in the new developments. Citizens of Chester were buying and selling the lead,[2] farming the lead mines,[3] farming the coal mines,[4] purchasing land and houses in North Wales.[5]

A considerable measure of economic control was therefore passing to the city where the political control was already centred. The circumstances may suggest that English policy consisted in exploiting Flintshire in the interests of the conquerors. That view is, in some measure, strengthened by the privileges of the gilds merchant of Rhuddlan and Flint,[6] and by the magnitude of the revenue extracted from the county during the reign of Edward II.[7] On the other hand, it may be pointed out that the subordination of Flintshire to the justice of Chester was natural enough in view of preceding circumstances; that as the fourteenth century advanced, Welshmen rose to prominence in this region, became sheriffs of the county,[8] became constables of Flint Castle,[9] and took over the farm of the coal mines;[10] and finally that since Chester was the nearest large town, it was inevitable and indeed desirable that its merchants should interest themselves in the commodities which a neighbouring region could supply.

Moreover, the advantages did not remain wholly with one side. In spite of the hundreds of Welsh troops who left their native land to fight as mercenaries in Scotland and in France, Wales still had a population as large as her resources could support. She frequently needed to import corn and turned to Chester for supplies. Grain and grain products—bread and beer—were therefore sent from Cheshire and here, as before, the dependence of the one region upon the other is illustrated most fully from the period of the Glendower rebellion. It had been a common device of the English for centuries to apply pressure to the Welsh by prohibiting the removal of food from the March land into

[1] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, XXVI.
[2] *Recog. Rolls*, 50, 173; *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 9, 27, 42.
[3] *Ibid.*, 57, 64, 70; *Recog. Rolls*, 213. [4] *Ibid.*, 441, 535.
[5] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, XLIV, and *vide infra*, pp. 129-130, on William of Doncaster.
[6] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, XLI. Cf. also Lipson, *Economic History of England*, 200: "The object here was to benefit English burgesses settled in these boroughs in North Wales by giving them the monopoly of trade."
[7] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, XLIX.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1. [9] *Chamber. Accts.*, 276.
[10] E.g., David de Eulowe, Blethin ap Ithel, Ithel ap Blethin. *Recog. Rolls*, 40, 176, 177, 259, 260.

Wales.[1] This device was employed again in 1402. Licences to export foodstuffs were, however, issued to dealers who could find sureties that the goods they purchased in Chester should not under any circumstances be allowed to pass to the rebels. Under this licensing system, a considerable trade was conducted with various parts of North Wales. In 1402-1404, grain, malt, peas and beans bought in Cheshire were sent to Carnarvon [2] by water, while grain, merchandise and fish were sent to Denbigh.[3] In 1408-1409 provisions were sent by sea to Harlech Castle.[4] During these years "traunters" (both Welsh and English) supplied the region near the Dee—Hawarden, Hope, Northop, Moldesdale, Bodidris, Wrexham—with provisions and beer from Chester.[5]

The trade of the city suffered, however, from the restrictions imposed,[6] and it is not surprising that a good deal of illicit trade was carried on. The Dee estuary was forded and quantities of grain passed from Wirral into Flintshire.[7] At the very time when all who had possessions in the March lands were commanded to reside there,[8] when repeated orders were made for watching the fords and lighting the beacons to give immediate warning of invasion,[9] quantities of provisions and goods were passing through the Broxton hundred, especially through the market town of Malpas and finding their way to the markets of Bromfield, Yale, Dyffryn Clwyd, and elsewhere in the rebel country.[10]

Prohibitions and licences increased the documents relative to the exchange of commodities between Wales and Cheshire, and thus left material for an ampler review of trading relations in the first decade of the fifteenth century than is possible in the peaceful years of the fourteenth century. It is, however, clear that before the Glendower rebellion, Chester was the chief market for a large part of North Wales, and it is noteworthy that as the city's importance declined, two causes of decay were assigned—the silting of the Dee estuary, and the rupture of trading relations with Wales. "An insurrection and rebellion occurred in Wales," runs a letter patent, "during which rebellion no one in our said city dared or was able to sell or buy victuals or traffic in any other merchandise with any Welshman . . . whereas the said Welshmen before the rebellion, used to buy and sell with our said citizens

[1] Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 673.

[2] *Recog. Rolls*, 85, 111. Grain and malt were also sent from Lancashire to Carnarvon in 1404. *Ibid.*, 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, 13, 31, 76.

[4] *Ibid.*, 227.

[5] *Ibid.*, 4, 78, 83, 211, 226, 230, 247, 347, 454. Writs were also issued for weekly deliveries of bread, beer, fish and meat from Chester to the abbot and convent of Basingwerk. *Ibid.*, 25, 185.

[6] Morris, *Chester*, 42.

[7] *Recog. Rolls*, 253, 447, 534.

[8] *Ibid.*, 55, 162, 170, 181.

[9] *Ibid.*, 4, 37, 55, 63, 68, 108, 117, 164, 211, 235, 247, 261, 367, etc.

[10] *Ibid.*, 63, 74, 103.

as well victuals as all manner other merchandise to the great profit of our said city and citizens." [1]

This was the normal relation of the Cestrians and the Welsh during the peace of the fourteenth century. It was a period of profitable trading. In Wales, national feeling had not died away. The national language was still used ; [2] the rude conditions of life, the scanty clothing, the insubstantial houses, the oat and barley bread still continued as in the days of Llewellyn.[3] But a change was slowly taking place. Intercourse with the English was beginning to influence Welsh manners. Above all there was less inclination to fight. "And if the cause be inquirede why thei lyve so now rather then in tymes afore, hyt may be answerede and seide that rychesse be the cause ther of, but now the drede of their goode withdrawethe them from the exercise of conflict." [4] Peace had brought prosperity, and prosperity showed them the prudence of ensuing peace.

[1] Morris (*Doc.*), 512.
[2] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II, 157.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 405.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, 409. From the mediæval translation. Cf. also "A quo tempore, guerrae in Wallia quieverunt ; Wallenses, more Anglorum paene victitant, thesauros congregant, rerum damna formidant." *Ibid.*, VIII, 282.

CHAPTER VI.

BUILDING.

During the period under review there was a good deal of building in Cheshire. In addition to what may be considered the normal repairs of fortifications, churches, bridges and manor houses, considerable extensions were effected in the castles at Chester and at Beeston; a very large new abbey was erected; and certain churches were rebuilt. It is the purpose of this chapter to deal with these building operations from an economic point of view. Their architectural or military significance does not fall within the scope of our work.

The condition of the roads in mediæval England rendered the transport of heavy material difficult, and caused builders to use the rivers wherever that was possible. It has already been shown that, with the exception of the estuarine portion of the Dee, the rivers of Cheshire were not of great service to the county in this respect. This lower portion of the Dee was indeed used with great advantage in the transport of large quantities of slate from the quarries of Ogwen to Chester.[1] With this exception, however, the builders had to face the usual problem of transport and naturally utilised, as far as possible, the building material which lay in the county.

Nor was Cheshire lacking in such material. The Triassic formation underlying the county yields an abundance of red sandstone which is easily quarried and worked. A good deal of this stone is too soft for building purposes, and the frequent mention of repairs (e.g. to the walls of Chester) suggests that the inferior stone had been used.[2] On the other hand, there are several quarries from which a harder stone can be obtained, and a glance at Beeston Castle shows that these better qualities were also worked.

In a few instances the actual quarries used are mentioned. There were, for example, at least two under the shadow of the walls of Chester. From one, lying just outside the North Gate, stone was hewn for Chester Castle (in 1302).[3] From another lying to the south of the city, stone was obtained for the Dee bridge.[4] There can be little doubt that the

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241. [2] Morris, *Chester*, 243.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 25. Morris (*Doc.*), 571.
[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 439, *Chamber. Accts.*, 169, 242. Morris, 168.

stone used in repairing the city walls and in building the abbey was also obtained from these quarries and from the fosse of the castle. Other quarries which have been used for several centuries lie at Peckforton, at Storeton, and at Kelsall.[1]

The quarry concerning which the most detailed information remains, lies at Eddisbury, at the side of the old Roman road. Probably Eddisbury stone was used in the building of several churches ; it was certainly used in the erection of Vale Royal Abbey. Quarrying for the latter began in 1278 (1279). In January a smithy and some huts were erected.[2] In February the quarriers began hewing,[3] and the pay rolls for the following three years throw some light on the methods of quarrying in the thirteenth century. The workers were of three grades : master quarriers who received 18d. a week, mallet-men or cutters receiving 12d. a week,[4] and trimmers whose wages were 10d. a week. Work continued all the year round with the exception of periods at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide and certain saints' days. At the end of October, wages were reduced for all grades by one-sixth " on account of the short days," and remained at the lower rate till February or March.

The men were organised in groups of about eight under a master-mason, and remained in these groups at a particular part of the quarry. In addition to their mallets, hammers and chisels, they used " coyns " or " wegges " costing 2½d. each and picks worth 18d. each.[5] The stone was trimmed in the quarry and then hauled to the site of the abbey to be shaped by the masons. Many of the workers were not Cheshire men. Among the mallet men were Thomas de Dieulacres, who bore the name of a Staffordshire abbey, Philip de Dore and Henry de Dore,[6] who probably came from Dore in Herefordshire, Richard de Herford and Peter de Herford, who apparently came from the same county.

But timber was in greater demand than stone for building purposes and timber was plentiful, for mediæval Cheshire was well wooded. The neighbourhood of Chester was open country,[7] but large areas of the three great forests were under timber ; there were extensive woods at Cholmondeston,[8] Rudheath,[9] Oulton Lowe,[10] Beeston,[11] Huntington[12]

[1] Ormerod, I, LXXI. Concerning the antiquity of the Storeton quarry, see *The Cheshire Sheaf* (1896), 101, 105.

[2] *V.R.L. Book*, 203, 223. [3] *Ibid.*, 218.

[4] Quarriers hewing stone for the abbey of Durham in 1368-1369 were paid at the rate of 1s. 7d. a week, but they seldom did a full week's work. *Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham* (Surtees Society), 572.

[5] *V.R.L. Book*, 195-196.

[6] Dore Abbey was the parent house of Vale Royal.

[7] Cf. *Brut y Tywysogion*, 185. [8] *Recog. Rolls*, 517.

[9] *Plea Rolls of the County of Chester* (Deputy Keeper's Reports, No. XXVIII, 61). [10] *Ibid.*, 53. [11] *Ibid.*, 66.

[12] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. I, No. 1703.

and many smaller woods. It would be very difficult to give a detailed account of the kinds of trees in these woods and forests. Alders were common.[1] Aspens, limes and hazels are mentioned in connection with the making of hurdles.[2] But it was oaks that were chiefly in demand, and of these the forests contained large numbers.

The felling of oaks is, of course, one of the chief topics of the " Forest Rolls " of the period. From the regarder's point of view, its importance lay in the damage it inflicted on the forest. In some instances the purpose may have been to clear land for cultivation, but in many instances it is undoubtedly an indication of building, and in not a few instances building is actually mentioned. The abbots of Chester whom we have already noted for the vigour of their agricultural policy, were prominent also in felling and acquiring oaks. A certain John Thorold felled oaks at Great Mollington and gave two to the abbot and three to Sir Roger L'Estrange. On another occasion he gave the abbot four oaks which were subsequently carried to the abbot's manor of Upton. Charged with the offence, John contended that he had the right to fell oaks for the purpose of building, and to give oaks to his neighbours for that purpose. Judgment was withheld pending an inquiry,[3] but when Ranulph Launcelyn was accused of felling ten oaks in Bebington wood and selling them to the abbot, he was convicted.[4] A few years later the regarders reported that the abbot had felled six oaks and carried them to his manor of Mollington for building purposes.[5] These were small numbers, but much greater ones appear in the rolls for the reign of Edward III. In 1347 William of Prenton was found to have felled twenty oaks, William of Tranmere (Tranmol) twenty-three oaks and nine other big trees, and Richard Starkey twenty,[6] while the abbot of Chester had cut down no less than one hundred and forty-four.[7]

Notwithstanding the abundance of timber, measures were taken to prevent the excessive use of oak. Barons might use their own timber at their will,[8] but oaks were not legally removed from the royal forests without the earl's express permission. Indeed it was a condition of the appointment of the justice of Chester that he should not " cut down nor sell any oaks, on this side the water of Dee without the king's

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 143 ; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. I, No. 1128 ; *Plea Rolls* (Deputy Keeper's Reports, XXVIII), 27 ; " Assize Roll," Chester, 17/12, m. 6 ; " Forest Roll," Chester, 33/1, m. 1. [2] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. I, No. 1703.

[3] " Forest Roll," Chester, 33/2, m. 2. Date 1286. There is an error of date in the description of this roll in the P.R.O. catalogue (*Lists and Indexes*, 40). The pleas are those of 14 Edward I (Not 14 Edward III), as is shown by the association of the abbot of Vale Royal with Reginald de Grey to hold the pleas of the forest. *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 223.

[4] " Forest Roll," Chester, 33/2, m. 2. [5] Ibid., 33/1, m. 12.

[6] Ibid., 33/4, m. 3. [7] Ibid., 33/4, m. 5.

[8] See Ranulf's charter in *Chester Chartulary*, 102.

licence or order."[1] The numerous "licences" and "orders" he received under this head afford, therefore, a guide to the building operations in the county, in so far as timber from the royal forests was utilised.

Delamere Forest was the greatest source of such timber. Over and over again the justice or the chief forester is instructed to allow the delivery of timber for buildings of one kind or another. The frequent and extensive alterations and repairs of the castle and mills of Chester,[2] the enlargement and repairs of the fortifications at Beeston Castle,[3] the mills and bridge at Northwich,[4] the mill and manor-house at Frodsham,[5] the manor-house and pinfold at Dunham,[6] the scaffolds at Bunbury Church,[7] and repairs of Tarporley Church,[8] the great fosse called Holpulgote [9]—all these made large demands on the oaks of Delamere, while the whole of the timber used in the building of Vale Royal abbey was drawn from the same source, the workers receiving 12d. a week for felling the trees and preparing the trunks in the forest.[10]

It was, however, no part of the royal policy to impoverish the forests of Cheshire. The strict control of the delivery of oaks has already been mentioned. Still stricter measures were ordered by the Black Prince in 1351 when, it was stated, "the forests have been, and still are being daily, destroyed." The abbot of Vale Royal (who had the right of housebote) was to be forbidden to take any timber without the livery of the justice and chamberlain, and the chamberlain himself was to select the timber and mark the trees with a special axe before they were cut. Such trees were to be chosen where their removal would occasion least damage, and the abbot was to have timber for no purpose save building.[11] At the same time, letters were sent direct to the abbot praying him to forbear from taking fuel in Delamere Forest,[12] and instructions were given that others who had the right to take fuel be requested to take turves,[13] while foresters were forbidden to take any fuel at all save wood blown down by the wind and unsuitable for timber.[14] Even the timber needed for the repair of the prince's mills, weirs and other works was to be marked in the same manner as that allowed to the abbot of Vale Royal, and a memorandum was to be kept both of the quantity of wood removed and the purpose for which it was required.[15] There are, moreover, indications of great care being taken respecting the removal

[1] *C.F.R.* (1272-1307), 155, 280, 428; *ibid.* (1307-1319), 5. *V.R.L. Book*, 42.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241, 80, etc. [3] *Ibid.*, 43.
[4] *Ibid.*, 251; *C.P.R.* (1358-61), 303. [5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 271-272.
[6] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*.
[7] *Recog. Rolls*, 80. [8] *Ibid.*, 155. [9] *Vide supra*, 19-20.
[10] *V.R.L. Book*, 204. [11] T.R. Book, 279, fol. 13, item 25.
[12] Ibid., fol. 21. [13] Ibid., fol. 13, item 26.
[14] Ibid., fol. 14, item 28. [15] Ibid., fol. 14, item 27.

Photograph by F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.

BUNBURY CHURCH, FROM THE WEST

of timber from the woods on the Cheshire estates of the Duchy of Lancaster.[1]

Under the circumstances, the chamberlain sometimes used stone instead of timber, or looked elsewhere for his supplies. In 1358, he states that a quarry is being used at Chester " to save the timber and woods in Delamere." [2] Throughout the century, supplies of wood both for building and for fuel are drawn from North Wales. Repairs at Chester Castle are effected with wood from Overton [3] (in Maelor Saesneg). The chapel of Chester Castle is repaired with wood from Eulowe,[4] and when 13,500 pales are required for enclosing the park of Shotwick, they are made in the wood of Eulowe,[5] while Kinnerton,[6] Hope,[7] and Loitcoit [8] contribute to the supplies of wood which pass into Chester.

Nor was wood the only building requisite furnished by North Wales. The rich mineral deposits of Flintshire were already being worked and Cheshire men were interested in their development.[9] The abbot of Vale Royal had received the custody of the lead mines of Englefeld.[10] and William of Doncaster, a citizen of Chester, bought large quantities of lead,[11] and afterwards farmed the lead mines of Englefeld.[12] Probably the lead ore was largely exported to England.[13] Some of it was founded at Chester Castle,[14] and much of the lead used in roofing the castles and manor-houses of Cheshire doubtless came from Flintshire.[15] Lead was also imported by Cheshire men from the Isle of Man and used on the castles of North Wales,[16] and on one occasion fourteen sheets of lead were sent to Chester from Turnberry Castle in Scotland.[17]

Iron also was obtained from Flintshire,[18] and from Newcastle (Staffordshire).[19] Large quantities of nails were bought from William of Newcastle for the work at Vale Royal.[20] These nails were distinguished into two classes, viz. : nails for lathes (worth 9d. a thousand) and nails for boards (worth 15d. a thousand). A little later board nails

[1] Roger of Hatton, parker of Northwood, received by indenture 4281 oaks growing in the park there, numbered and by order of William de Nesfield, chief seneschal of the lord, delivered to him for safe keeping on pain of forfeiture of his office and all his chattels. William Travers was in charge of the woods of Ashwood under similar conditions. " Ministers' Accounts," 4/32, *in dorso*.

[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 242.
[3] *Ibid.*, 7, 42.
[4] *Ibid.*, 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, 215.
[6] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 255, 256.
[7] Morris, *Chester*, 103 *nn.*
[8] *Recog. Rolls*, 101, 102, 104, 283, 485.
[9] For fuller details, *vide supra*, 84-85.
[10] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 69.
[11] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 9, 27, 42.
[12] *Ibid.*, 64.
[13] *Ibid.*, Introd., xliii.
[14] *Chamber. Accts.*, 43, and see *ibid.*, 215.
[15] See *Recog. Rolls*, 216.
[16] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 350.
[17] *Chamber. Accts.*, 7.
[18] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, Introd., xliii; *Chamber. Accts.*, 6.
[19] *V.R.L. Book*, 196.
[20] *Ibid.*, 197.

were bought in Chester at 20d. a thousand,[1] and in smaller quantities at 2½d. or 3d. a hundred.[2]

Lime also could be obtained from Wales,[3] and cost (with transport included) 10s. to 12s. a hundredweight at Vale Royal.[4] Slates and millstones were brought from Anglesey.[5] Tin was used for soldering at Chester and at Beeston Castle, but its origin is not stated.[6]

Maintenance of the castles and other property of the earl of Chester in Cheshire and North Wales gave employment at short intervals to several men, and led ultimately to the formation of a small permanent staff—a master mason, a master carpenter and (for certain periods) a plumber.

In the early years of the fourteenth century the miscellaneous building work was carried out under the supervision of Richard the Engineer. This man, who held the manor of Belgrave,[7] was responsible for the purchase of material and for the making of contracts with craftsmen,[8] and he received a salary of 12d. a day.[9] Under his supervision, Richard de Paris, a mason,[10] and Henry and William de Wakefield, carpenters,[11] made considerable alterations at Chester Castle.

The work of Richard the Engineer ended in 1312, and although the office of surveyor of the king's works is still occasionally mentioned,[12] it seems to have declined in importance, and was possibly merged in that of one of the master craftsmen, who, a few years later, became permanent officials. The first of these mentioned in the *Chamberlains' Accounts* was Richard de Legh. This man had already been engaged as a carpenter on work at Beeston Castle and at Chester in 1325, and was appointed to the office of King's Carpenter in 1326. His duties were defined as the reparation of the king's works in the counties of Chester and Flint and he received a salary of 4d. a day.[13]

From 1347 to 1360, Nicholas de Eccleston was the earl's master carpenter and he received a fee of 3d. a day (raised to 4d. in 1350-1351) with 10 shillings annually for a robe.[14] The first few years of his tenure of the office coincided with the depression in building which occurred at the time of the Black Death, and Nicholas appears to have been engaged in the sale of brushwood from Delamere Forest rather than in

[1] Morris, *Chester*, 104.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 87; cf. *ibid.*, 44. Lathnailes, lednayles, bordnailles and spikyng (nails) occur in the account of the bailiff of Dunham—"Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*.
[3] *Recog. Rolls*, 232, 270.
[4] *V.R.L. Book*, 197, 198.
[5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241, 167, 126.
[6] *Ibid.*, 7, 79, 221.
[7] Ormerod, II, 826 and note.
[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 7, 8, 25.
[9] *Ibid.*, 5, 78.
[10] *Ibid.*, 6, 25, 79, 80.
[11] *Ibid.*, 24, 79, 80.
[12] E.g., *ibid.*, 103.
[13] *Ibid.*, 96, 97, 103, 110, *C.Cl.R.* (1330-1333), 186.
[14] *Chamber. Accts.*, 122, 123, 160.

building.[1] In 1357-1358 he was working on the repair of Northwich mill,[2] and carried out some work on the manor of Frodsham.[3]

He was followed by William de Erkaloo in 1361 [4] and by William de Newehall in 1377. The latter held the office in the counties of Chester and Flint, and had "power to take such workmen, carts, horses, etc., as should be needful for the service of the Prince, on reasonable payment." [5] In 1387 the office was granted to him for life,[6] and he appears to have lived to an advanced age, for in 1398 Robert Scot petitioned the king for a grant of the office on the ground that William de Newehall was too old and feeble to fulfil the duties of the office. Robert received a grant of the reversion of the office and was actually appointed to it in 1399-1400.[7] Only a few months elapsed, however, before William de Newehall was reappointed,[8] and he was still master carpenter as late as 1408.[9]

Owing to the extensive use of wood in mediæval building, and the frequent association of the master carpenter with the foresters or parkers in the disposal of brushwood and timber, references to the office of master carpenter in contemporary records are numerous. Concerning the office of master mason the evidence is less abundant. The first reference in the *Chamberlains' Accounts* occurs in 1349-1350 when Hugh de Huntingdon "the Prince's mason in the counties of Chester and Flint and North Wales" receives payment for 329 days at 6d. a day.[10] His name occurs again in the accounts for 1350-1351 and for 1354-1355 in connection with repairs at Chester Castle.[11] There is, however, no further mention of his salary, and it is possible that the later work was done by contract. At Hugh's death in 1355 or 1356,[12] John de Tichmarsh became the lord's mason, but the only reference to his work is a statement of his pay for 192 days at 6d. a day.[13]

In 1361 the office was granted to William de Helpeston,[14] a member of a family already prominent as builders. John Helpeston had built the Water Tower at Chester in 1323, by contract with the mayor and citizens of Chester.[15] Robert de Helpeston, a mason, had carried out "divers works" at Chester Castle and at the manor of Shotwick in 1325-1326.[16] William de Helpeston, the newly appointed master-mason had been one of the men responsible for certain building operations at

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 122, 148, 160, 222. "Eaton" MS., Edward III/110.
[2] "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 2. [3] Ibid., m. 7.
[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 93, 183. Erkaloo is probably Ercal in Shropshire.
[5] *Ibid.*, 361. [6] *Ibid.*, 361. [7] *Ibid.*, 425.
[8] *Ibid.*, 361. [9] *Ibid.*, 335.
[10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 129. [11] *Ibid.*, 167, 170, 230.
[12] His widow is mentioned in the account for 1356-1357 (*ibid.*, 233).
[13] *Chamber. Accts.*, 235. [14] *Recog. Rolls*, 230.
[15] Morris (*Chester*), 244. [16] *Chamber. Accts.*, 96.

Vale Royal in 1360,[1] and was employed on the same task again in 1367.[2]

The exact duties of the master-mason are not clear. It might be surmised that they extended to the maintenance of the stonework of the castles and the general supervision of whatever building was being carried out at the earl's expense. The surmise is not, however, wholly true. It is not clear that all the repairs set down in the *Chamberlains' Accounts* came under his supervision. Indeed, it is clearly stated that the costly repairs of the Dee bridge in 1347-1350 were carried out by the justice himself.[3] The functions of the office may have varied from time to time. Neither the master-mason nor the master-carpenter were appointed by the justice, and his estimate of the capacity of the earl's nominees may have determined the duties they carried out. One of the master-masons held the office of the lord's comptroller,[4] and it may be noted that an earlier mason had been controller of the murage of the city of Chester.[5]

During the period in which Richard the Engineer was surveyor of the king's works, the lead roofs of the castles and manor-houses were repaired by various plumbers engaged for separate tasks. The most noteworthy of these was a monk of Combermere, called Thomas le Plummer, who spent no less than 166 days in a single year in work at Chester and at Beeston receiving 8d. a day for himself and his assistant.[6]

In 1353 the phrase the "lord's plumber" occurs in the *Chamberlains' Accounts*, the office being then held by Alan de Maurdyn.[7] This man and his assistant, Richard de Flint, effected various repairs on the roofs of the castles at Rhuddlan, Shotwick, Chester, Beeston and the hall at Frodsham during the years 1353-1360. Alan was, however, only paid for the period during which he was employed. His wages were 6d. a day and those of his assistant, 2d.[8] In 1357 he received a grant of a burgage and four acres of land in Flint[9] and in 1359 his wages were raised to 7d. a day.[10] Later in the century the office of lord's plumber became a permanent appointment.[11]

The existence of servants such as these, drawing a regular wage, and charged with the maintenance of the fabric of the castles, naturally leads to the omission from the *Chamberlains' Accounts* of details which would otherwise be included under building expenses. Repairs or alterations of some character or other, were, however, quite frequent at Chester Castle but much less frequent at the other castles.

[1] *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 441.
[2] *Recog. Rolls*, 230. Still another mason of the same name is associated with the affair of William de Bulkelegh (*vide infra*, 154).
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 126, 129.
[4] *Ibid.*, 230.
[5] *Ibid.*, 96, and *Recog. Rolls*, 233.
[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 42, 44.
[7] *Ibid.*, 215.
[8] *Ibid.*, 230, 235, 252, 271.
[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 337.
[10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 271.
[11] *Recog. Rolls*, 216, 383.

Photograph by H. Haines

BEESTON CASTLE, UPPER GATEWAY

There were three periods of building activity in the fourteenth century, viz.: 1301-1304, 1325-1327, and 1353-1360. It is tempting to read into these periods some explanation which contemporary circumstances will scarcely support; Wales was restive and revolts were not unlikely, but Welsh unrest was not more acute at these periods than at others. Moreover, there is difficulty in viewing these years as periods of exceptionally thorough administration or supervision by the earl. Nor are they accounted for by a financial surplus resulting from local prosperity. The simplest and probably the truest explanation is that while minor repairs might be effected at any time, it was necessary periodically to overhaul the whole structure of the various castles. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the repairs and alterations were not wholly of a military character.

The first period (1301-1304) overlapped some of the most critical years of the reign of Edward I, when baronial opposition to his plans was at its height. Memories of the Welsh revolt of 1294 may have been vivid for there had been bitter fighting at Carnarvon, Conway and Denbigh, and Edward himself had been in great peril.[1] His son Edward, prince of Wales, entered upon the direct government of the earldom in 1301,[2] and the initiative may have come from him. In any case, during the three years 1301-1304, the chamberlain paid out £109 for work at Beeston; £140 and £50 for work at Flint and Rhuddlan respectively; and £59 7s. for work at Chester.[3] These sums, moreover, represent little more than the wages accounts, since the greater part of the material was drawn from forests and quarries in the earl's possession.

The work at Chester and Rhuddlan continued during the three years and consisted of a large number of miscellaneous repairs especially to roofs, while at Flint the great tower was strengthened and a good deal of lead roofing effected.

It is convenient to deal with Beeston Castle at somewhat greater length. This castle, built about 1220 by Earl Randle Blundeville on his return from the Holy Land,[4] stood on the summit of an isolated hill which rises some 360 feet above the level of the surrounding plain. It was sufficiently distant from Wales to have enjoyed immunity from Welsh attack, but must properly be considered as one of the links in the scheme of border fortresses.

On the north and west the castle-crowned rock is precipitous. On the east and south its slope is steep. The inner bail built on the summit,

[1] Vickers, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 29; Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 255.
[2] Tout, *Edward II*, 374. He was at Chester, 13th April, 1301; Flint, 22nd April, 1301; Rhuddlan, 26th April, 1301; *C.P.R.* (1343-1345), 227-234.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, Beeston, 42-44; Flint, 8, 25; Rhuddlan, 8, 25; Chester, 8, 24, 41. The details for Flint and Rhuddlan are in *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 15, 16, 32.
[4] Higden, *Polychronicon*, VIII, 198.

and apparently consisting of a ring wall with three towers, was, therefore, well situated, and although a moat in such a position would be clearly impossible, the fortress was strengthened by a large fosse excavated from the rock and crossed, of course, by a bridge.

The building work on this castle during the first period was carried out in 1303-1304, under the direction of Hugh de Dymoke, a carpenter, and master Warin, a mason. It consisted in a general overhauling of the fabric : new steps, doors, galleries, windows, hinges, hooks, locks and keys were provided ; the castle was pointed, over 1100 rings of lime being bought for the purpose ; the three towers were crenellated and fitted with new lead roofs ; a new drawbridge was made and a " great massive stone wall before the said bridge, for receiving the said bridge, 34 feet high, 7 feet thick and 20 feet long," was also constructed. Twenty-four masons were employed on the work ; there was a smith with an assistant, and a number of women who carried water.[1]

After 1304 repairs of a minor character in the castles were effected as the need arose, but the *Chamberlains' Accounts* show no large expenditure on building till 1325. There are, however, gaps in the accounts, and it is clear from other sources that extensive alterations were made by Payn Tibotot at Chester Castle. Tibotot's high-handed conduct and insolent refusal to vacate his office after the appointment of his successor are well known. In December, 1309, he was instructed to repair the houses, walls, towers and gates of Chester Castle, and authorised to spend up to £100 on the work.[2] The absence of any *Chamberlains' Accounts* for 1310 and 1311 leaves some uncertainty respecting the manner in which he carried out his instructions. After his death, however, his executors brought evidence to show that not only had he spent the £100 authorised by the king, but he had also spent an additional £153 10s. 11d. on building operations. The evidence was regarded as satisfactory and the sum allowed to his executors.[3]

Tibotot's expenditure was, however, confined to the castle at Chester, and indeed throughout the greater part of the reign of Edward II very little money was spent on the maintenance and provisioning of the castles. It was not till 1325-1327 that any considerable repairs were effected. Even then the nature of the work is not clearly stated. The chamberlain received general instructions to order repairs at the castles of Chester, Flint, Rhuddlan and Beeston, and at the manor of Shotwick, a total expenditure of £140 being allowed.[4] In the *Chamberlains' Accounts* the repairs effected are described simply as " divers works " at Beeston, at Chester and at Shotwick, and beyond certain distinctions between payments to masons and to carpenters, no details are to be found. Moreover, the sum total of the moneys thus expended

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 42-44.
[2] *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 187.
[3] *Ibid.* (1313-1318), 294.
[4] *Ibid.* (1323-1327), 450.

only amounts to about £90.[1] The work may not have been completed when Edward III became king. In any case, he sent instructions in 1328 for the houses, chambers, turrets and other buildings in the castles at Chester, Beeston, Flint and Rhuddlan to be repaired,[2] and in 1331 ordered a strict inquiry to be made into the state of these castles and also of the manors of Shotwick and Frodsham.[3]

The third period, beginning in 1353, was one of great activity. The Black Prince was now a man, and his lavish expenditure on pleasures and hospitality had involved him deeply in debt. Year after year he raised very large sums from his earldom of Chester,[4] but the temptation to allow his possessions to fall into decay was resisted.[5] Large quantities of arms were bought and his castles and manors were reconditioned at an expense which, in view of all the circumstances, is creditable to his sense of duty. The activity reached its height in the years 1358-1360, when builders were at work on the castles of Beeston, Chester, Flint, Rhuddlan, at the halls of the manors of Peckforton, Frodsham and Shotwick, and the mills at Chester and Northwich.

The total cost of these extensive operations must have reached about £900.[6] Almost all of this large sum was expended within the county of Chester, and almost all of it was paid out in wages. It was unnecessary to buy timber, for supplies were obtained from Delamere Forest for the work at Chester, and from Peckforton Park for that at Beeston. It was unnecessary to buy stone. The only materials purchased were cement, iron and steel.

By far the greater part of the sum was expended at Chester, principally for work on the castle itself—the wall of the inner bail, and the chapel—but partly on the fulling mills, corn mills and malt mill, and the exchequer.

More than £130 was spent on work at Beeston Castle, but details of the operations are missing. At the manor of Frodsham, a new sheep

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 96, 97, 103.
[2] *C.Cl.R.* (1327-1330), 288.
[3] *Ibid.* (1330-1333), 186.
[4] *Vide supra*, 16-19.

[5] The keynote of the policy at this period is seen in a letter of the prince to the justice and chamberlain in 1355 when they had asked for instructions respecting the hall at Macclesfield which had been unroofed. The reply states simply that "the prince wills that all such defects be repaired from year to year." "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 362, item 4.

[6] The numerous entries collected and summarised by years work out as follows :—

1353-54	£169	10	10
1354-55	179	19	4¾
1356-57	66	15	5
1357-58	96	10	2½
1358-59	123	17	5½
1359-60	144	10	9
	£781	4	0¾

The *Chamberlains' Account* for 1355-56 is missing. If, however, the average expenditure of the other six years (£130 4s. od.) be assumed for 1355-56, the total is £911 8s. od. A number of items such as expenditure on fencing which are related to, but not properly building, have been excluded. The details are in *Chamber. Accts.*, 214-215, 230, 235, 241, 251, 271-272.

pen, a new kitchen and an " Oriel " were built, while a water-mill and the tower of the manor were repaired. Lead roofs on several of the buildings were repaired, and there is an interesting item of " 21,000 slate stones for the roof of the great stable in Chester Castle." These stones were bought at Ogwen at a cost of 38s. 6d., brought by water to Shotwick, and thence by land to Chester, the total cost of transport being £2 7s. 3d.[1]

In addition to these extensive building operations on the castles and manors belonging to the earl of Chester, two other classes of building may be distinguished which may be considered as public works and private works. In the former class are the bridges in the highways crossing the Dee, Mersey, Weaver and lesser streams where the cost of maintenance was a public charge.[2] None of these bridges was very large, but as they were links in important highways, both local and general interests necessitated their being kept in repair.

First in importance was the bridge over the Dee at Chester. The continuous use of this wooden structure by the traffic of war as well as of peace would normally necessitate periodic repair, but the bridge suffered several times from floods or from high tides. In 1279 an exceptionally high tide swept it away.[3] Rebuilt immediately under royal pressure,[4] the bridge was carried away by floods in 1297.[5] Again rebuilt, it underwent considerable repairs in 1347-1348-1349,[6] but was swept away by floods in 1353.[7] It was completed by 1354,[8] but fell again in the reign of Richard II.[9]

The cost of maintenance was, therefore, no small burden. At the Conquest, the reeve might summon one man from each hide in the county for the rebuilding of the bridge.[10] Such an arrangement, however equitable, was no doubt inconvenient in practice, and the rebuilding in 1280 gave rise to a prolonged controversy in which both the city and the county sought to lessen and define their liability.[11] The struggle

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241.

[2] I have excluded bridges, the maintenance of which fell upon individuals or monasteries. Among such, are bridges leading to Ince fields, a bridge below Tarvin, a bridge over Bromborough Pool where liability was attributed to the abbot of Chester. " Harl." MS. 1071/61 ; *Cheshire Sheaf* (1909), 18.

[3] *Annales Cestrienses*, 107. [4] *Vide supra*, 81. [5] Morris, *Chester*, 231.

[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 126, 129, 141. In his accounts for 1349-1350, and 1350-1351, the Sheriff of Chester says, " the bridge was lately broken down and is not yet altogether repaired " (*Chamber. Accts.*, 141, 179).

[7] Morris, *Chester*, 231. [8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 221.

[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 94-95 ; Morris, *Chester*, 503.

[10] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 84.

[11] Morris, 230, quotes a decision of 14 Edward I. " Harl." MS. 2071/89, contains a statement of the exemption of the abbot of Chester from liability. The ultimate agreement is in *Calendar of Fines, Welsh Records*, No. 9, printed in Appendix of *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVIII, p. 7, and is dated 16 Edward I.

ended in an agreement by which each accepted responsibility for certain measured portions of the bridge. Incidentally the terms of the agreement throw light on the nature of the structure. " The mayor and citizens," it runs, " will construct, repair and sustain a certain part of the bridge nearer the town of Newbolt containing in length of solid earth and stonework 8 feet, and contiguous thereto 49 feet of woodwork in the hollow of the bridge."

Embers of the old controversy were fanned into flame again about 1351 when the bridge was in a dilapidated state. Commissioners were instructed to find who was responsible for the prolonged unsatisfactory condition of the bridge and compel them to repair the defects and complete the bridge.[1] The harshness of the order was subsequently softened in recognition of the heavy burdens already borne. The men responsible for the maintenance of the bridge should be discharged from further liability on one condition : they must finish the bridge this once.[2]

During the fourteenth century the amount of stone in the structure was increased, partly, perhaps, with a view to greater strength, and partly with a view to saving the earl's timber. In 1350 and in 1357, stone was obtained from a quarry near the bridge, and the Chamberlain justified his expenditure in this stone on the ground that " the lord provides and is bound to provide timber for the same bridge as often as it shall be necessary, therefore he granted to pay for the quarry for the work of the said bridge to save the timber and his woods in Delamere Forest, where the said wood is wont to be taken." [3]

The bridges crossing the Mersey and Weaver also underwent repair and reconstruction at intervals. Warrington bridge was broken about 1365 and rebuilt (in part at least) of stone about 1367.[4] Northwich bridge on the other hand was a wooden structure which underwent repairs in 1353.[5] Nantwich received a grant of pontage for five years in 1332 [6] and a similar grant was made in 1331 for the construction of a stone bridge over the Dane at Saltersford.[7] Agreements concerning the construction and repair of certain less important bridges were made between the abbot of Chester and neighbouring lords,[8] and there is an interesting notice of the underpinning of a bridge at Dunham. For this operation four score of piles were made and brought from Kingsley, and two men were employed in " placing the said piles under the bridge and strengthening it." [9]

[1] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 14, item 33.
[2] Ibid., fols. 24, 30.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 169, 242.
[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 136, 522. The date of the earliest reference to Warrington Bridge is discussed by Helsby in a footnote to Ormerod, I, 604.
[5] *Recog. Rolls*, 365 ; *Chamber. Accts.*, 222.
[6] *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 378.
[7] *Ibid.*, 170.
[8] *Chester Chartulary*, 375, 385, 477.
[9] " Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*. Date 30-31 Edward III. The bridge is called " ponte de Bolyn."

Finally we come to private works, a term which may comprehend building and repair of granges, manors, weirs, mills, churches, abbeys, priories. Operations of this class were fairly frequent, for in addition to the ordinary decay of fabrics, there were many fires which necessitated rebuilding. Chester itself suffered very heavily from fire in 1278; and there were serious fires at Middlewich in 1281, at the manor-house of Bromborough in 1284, while a large part of Stanlawe abbey was burnt down in 1289, and sixty-five saltpits were destroyed by a fire at Northwich in 1306-1307.[1] Accordingly, this section includes building operations of the most diverse kinds: the hall at Dunham Massey is plastered and new joists are placed under the chapel;[2] the grange at Eaton (by Tarporley) is repaired with laths;[3] a great hall for traders is built at Middlewich;[4] the mill wheel at Congleton is mended;[5] 460 pales are made and used in repairing the fence of Dunham Park; and 200 more for making a penfold.[6] More than 2000 pales were made and used for the fence round Whitley Park.[7]

Much of this class of work is too miscellaneous for brief and ordered treatment, but the ecclesiastical building may be dealt with. The fourteenth century might not unjustly be described as a period of church building in Cheshire, for some of the largest churches in the county were erected or enlarged at this period. Among them must be ranked the beautiful church at Nantwich,[8] the churches of Acton,[9] Bunbury,[10] Tarvin, Bebington,[11] Wallasey,[12] Macclesfield[13] and Bosley.[14] Moreover, during the reign of Edward I, a good deal of the great abbey of St. Werburgh at Chester was rebuilt. The abbacy of Simon of Whitchurch (1265-1291) was a period of great activity in the life of the convent. Under his stimulus, the whole of the eastern portions of the building (including the Choir and Lady chapel) were erected forming "a single and complete design but carried out piecemeal, the details being varied at pleasure as the works were, bit by bit, carried into execution."[15]

But by far the largest and grandest work of our period was the building of the great abbey of Vale Royal, almost the last Cistercian

[1] *Vide infra*, 110. [2] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*.
[3] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101.
[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 374. It was repaired in 1368-1369—"Ministers' Accounts," 786/10, m. 1. [5] Ibid., 801/16, m. 3.
[6] Ibid., 801/16, m. 4, *in dorso*. [7] Ibid., 4/32.
[8] Hall, *History of the Town and Parish of Nantwich*, 275-276.
[9] Hall, "Acton Church and Dorfold Hall," in *Journal of Chester Arch. and Historical Society*, Vol. XV, 69.
[10] Lowe, *Bunbury Church* (printed privately). The present nave is of a later date, but the tower and chancel are fourteenth-century work. There were repairs in 1386—*Recog. Rolls*, 80.
[11] *Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Society*, XIII, N.S., 99-100.
[12] *Chester Arch. and Hist. Society*, N.S., I, 62.
[13] Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, II, 487. [14] *Ibid.*, II, 429.
[15] Sir Gilbert Scott in *Chester Arch. and Hist. Society*, III, 169, *et seq.*

VALE ROYAL ABBEY

From a drawing by Basil Pendleton

Reprinted from *Notes on the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary, Vale Royal, Cheshire*, by Basil Pendleton, L.R.I.B.A., F.M.S.A.

house built in England.[1] On a site chosen by the monks themselves rose a magnificent pile endowed by Edward I. Building operations were formally begun early in August, 1277, when, amid a splendid gathering of nobles, the first stone was solemnly laid by the king, and mass was celebrated by Bishop Burnel and the Bishop of St. Asaph.[2]

For several years the building of this abbey must have been a prominent feature in the minds of the people of mid-Cheshire. Numbers of workmen were drawn from many parts of the kingdom,[3] while scores of local men found employment, either in the transport of material or in the quarries, smithies and workshops.

The hewing of stone [4] in the Eddisbury quarry and its cartage to the site of the abbey have already been mentioned.[5] Lime was obtained from Chester and Frodsham,[6] and timber from Delamere Forest. A certain William of Newcastle supplied large quantities of iron and nails. Straw was bought both for making plaster and for covering unset mortar in frosty weather, while small quantities of wax and pitch were used in making cement, and large quantities of tools were brought.

To afford shelter for the workers, a number of huts and workshops were erected, and smithies were made both at the quarries and the site of the abbey. A pond was dug on higher ground to provide a water-course. A gang of men was sent into the forest to cut boards from the felled trees, while another gang was busy levelling the ground on which the site of the monastery was to be traced. Thus the great work was begun.

During the early years, it was pushed forward with great energy, the total number of men engaged in quarrying, carting and building rising as high as two hundred. The expenses were met by devoting royal income from various sources to the cost of building. The farm of the county of Chester (1000 marks),[7] the custody of the lands of certain minors,[8] the rent of Oswestry Castle (£200),[9] an amercement of the community of Cheshire,[10] these were some of the grants for the work. But the revenue derived from such sources was subject to fluctuation. Payments fell into arrears,[11] heirs attained their majority, the king himself drew the rents, or—most serious of all—wars broke

[1] In fulfilment of a vow Edward had founded an abbey at Darnhall. The site proved unsatisfactory, and the monks being allowed to select a site, chose one a few miles distant in the valley of the Weaver. This spot became known as Vallis Regalis (*V.R.L. Book*, 4, 5, 8).

[2] *Ibid.*, 5.

[3] Among the surnames of the masons are Salisbury, Nottingham, Pershore, St. Albans, Hereford, Eynsham, Leominster. Among the carpenters are Stafford, Coventry, etc.

[4] *Vide supra*, 90.

[5] *Vide supra*, 66-67, 73-75.

[6] The whole of the material for the account of the building operations is drawn from "The Building Accounts," printed in the appendix of the *V.R.L. Book*, 192-231.

[7] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 465.

[8] *Ibid.* (1272-1281), 247.

[9] *Ibid.* (1272-1281), 309, 311, 404, 416; *ibid.* (1287-1292), 32, 66.

[10] *C.Cl.R.* (1279-1288), 89.

[11] *V.R.L. Book*, 194.

out in Wales, and the money intended for the building of the abbey was expended on the maintenance of castles and troops.[1] The completion of the edifice was therefore hindered, and since the income from the abbey estates scarcely sufficed for the maintenance of the works, there was little surplus to defray the cost of building.[2] Edward I paid £37,000 towards the expenses.[3] His son and grandson showed much less interest in the work. Indeed, the zeal with which operations had begun, had abated and the abbot made piteous appeals to Edward II for more money with which to " maintain and continue the work." [4] In 1330 the convent moved from the temporary buildings into the " new monastery of Vale Royal," [5] but as late as 1336, much of the original design remained unexecuted. " We have one very large church commenced by the king of England at our first foundation, but by no means finished," the abbot wrote. " For at the first foundation he built it with stone walls, but the vaults remain to be built with the roof and the glass and the other ornaments of the Church. Moreover, the cloister, chapter-house, dormitory, refectory and other offices of the monastery, still remain to be built in a style corresponding with the church ; for the accomplishment of which the rents of our house are not sufficient." [6]

It was the misfortune of Vale Royal that it was founded at a date when the stream of donations had almost dried up. Its possessions were not proportionate to its size, and as the years passed by, scarcely any further gifts were received. But the grandeur of its design is well established. Excavations in recent years have revealed the ground plan of the abbey and proved conclusively that in size it was unsurpassed by any Cistercian abbey in England. Fountains, for many years considered the longest abbey in the kingdom, had a total length of 410 feet, while Vale Royal measured 421 feet. And although not a single arch or doorway remains to-day, the architect who conducted the excavations, mentally reconstructing the edifice, declared it " must indeed have been a magnificent and extensive ecclesiastical building which probably had not its equal in the county of Chester." [7]

Though the details of the superstructure remain in some measure a matter of conjecture, copious details of the early building operations are available in the building accounts [8] of Leonius who was paymaster at Vale Royal from 1278 to 1281. These accounts contain the prices

[1] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 169; *C.Cl.R.* (1279-1288), 217.
[2] *V.R.L. Book*, 162-163.
[3] *Ibid.*, 44.
[4] *Ibid.*, 44, 52, and " Ancient Petitions," 7226, 7247.
[5] *Ibid.*, 5-6.
[6] *Ibid.*, 163.
[7] See " Notes on the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary, Vale Royal, Cheshire ; with a brief account of the Excavations done on the site of the Abbey Church in 1911 and 1912," by Basil Pendleton, M.S.A., F.M.S.A. (printed privately for Mr. Dempster, the present tenant of Vale Royal).
[8] *V.R.L. Book*, Appendix G, 192-231.

of materials; the wages (and in many instances the names) of the craftsmen, labourers and carters; the number of weeks worked by each; the price of the tools and a mass of other information. They point, moreover, to a high degree of organisation in preparations for building, in the supply of materials, in the disposition of the workers and in the manner of payment.

The normal day for all payments—whether to merchant, carter or craftsmen—was Sunday. The workers were paid in advance, usually for several weeks' work at a time, the rate of pay being greater in spring and summer than in winter. Most of them received a weekly wage, but there are instances of sawyers, plasterers and the lower grade of masons being paid at piece-work rates.[1] Easter week and Whitweek appear to have been observed as holidays, but some of the men worked for part of these periods.

Leonius himself had been appointed chamberlain of Chester and received "the custody of (the king's) works on the abbey of Vale Royal during his pleasure."[2] His rate of the pay does not appear in the accounts, nor (apart from his very detailed rolls of expenses) is it possible to trace the exact functions he performed though these may in large measure be inferred from those of similar officers elsewhere.[3] The master of the works was Walter de Hereford. He is nowhere described as the master mason, but his name appears first on the pay rolls of the masons and he received 2s. a day without any diminution for holidays or winter rates.

Next in importance are the masons, their wages ranging from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a week. Carpenters were paid from 16d. to 26d. a week, sawyers from 16d. to 2s., and timber fellers, 12d. Master plasterers received 12d. a week and their labourers 9d. A smith who repaired the tools was paid 2s. a week, his servant 1s., the charcoal men, 1s. A "portehache" who carried tools from the masons to the smithy received 8d. a week, while two bellows men drew 9d. a week each. Finally, the labourers who dug the ditches, made the mortar and carried the stones, received 9d. a week, and their foreman 1s. During the months of November, December and January, rates of pay were reduced by about one-sixth.[4]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 206-208. Piece-work rates appear to have been uncommon. I have found other instances in the case of a carpenter at Frodsham in 1357-1358 ("Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 7), and ditchers at Frodsham in 1315-1316 ("Ministers' Accounts," 801/12).

[2] *C.Cl.R.* (1272-1279), 460.

[3] On the position of "custos," see A. H. Thompson; "Cathedral Builders of the Middle Ages," in *History*, X, 143-147.

[4] Mason's wages were reduced from 30d. to 25d. or from 27d. to 23d. Carpenters who had 26d. and 24d. now received 22d. and 20d. respectively. Labourers' wages fell from 9d. to 7½d. A reduction of masons' wages in winter was common. See Thompson, *op. cit.*, in *History* X, 146.

Among the tools and implements used, the following values are of interest: bellows, 7s. 8d.; anvils, 18d. and 2s.; pincers, 12d.; great axes, 6d.; hammers, 4d. and 5d.; building lines, 6d.; buckets, $2\frac{1}{2}$d.; sieves, $1\frac{1}{2}$d. and 3d.; nails, 9d. and 1s. 3d. per thousand. It may be noted also that it was the custom to buy the tools of the masons when they came to work with tools of their own.[1]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 196.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WICHES.

It is noteworthy that the history of the salt industry in Cheshire has not yet been written. Indeed, an unwary reader of Thorold Rogers might conclude that there was very little to write. "That the Romans made use of the brine springs of Worcestershire and Cheshire," he says, "I can well believe; that the English did not, before the beginning of the eighteenth century, I am quite certain; for the best authorities at the time, those on the spot declare they did not."[1] This view is, of course, mistaken, or at any rate, very misleading. The existence of the salt industry in mediæval Cheshire is attested by a great mass of evidence. It is, however, unfortunate that the evidence is not sufficiently diversified to provide a basis for a well-balanced sketch.[2]

Below the surface of the county lie large deposits of saline rocks, the presence of which may well have been known to the Romans. In modern times, the workings have been chiefly confined to the valleys of the Weaver and its tributary the Dane, but the salt has been obtained also in the west of the county, near the Dee,[3] at points which were more accessible to the Welsh.

[1] *Six Centuries* (14th edn., 1919), 96. Roger's views on mediæval English salt were seriously in error. In his *Hist. Agriculture* (Oxford, 1866) he refers twice to the copiousness of his evidence relating to salt (I, 455, 457), refuses to rule out the possibility of salt being manufactured in Cheshire, but greatly doubts it. "I cannot undertake to say that salt was not manufactured from brine springs. . . . I cannot assert that the brine springs of those two counties (viz., Cheshire and Worcestershire) were not rendered available for supply. In all likelihood the supply was all but universally, if not wholly, procured from the evaporation of sea water." *Op. cit.*, I, 457-458. Rogers held that

(*a*) It "was always produced by solar heat" (*Six Centuries*, 97).
(*b*) It "was entirely produced in the southern counties" (*ibid.*, 96).
(*c*) It "was full of impurities" (*ibid.*, 96).

The first two statements are erroneous, and the third needs some qualification. *Vide infra*, 109.

[2] Concerning the gaps in evidence, *vide infra*, 117-118.

[3] Leland refers to small workings or traces of workings near Combermere, at Droitwich near Malpas, and at Aldersley near Malpas. *Itinerary* (ed. L. T. Smith), IV, 4; V, 6. Among the grants to the abbey of St. Werburgh was a salthouse at Fulwich (*Chester Chartulary*, I, 18). Brine springs in this neighbourhood are also mentioned in *Ancient Deeds*, Vol. VI, c. 4116, 4043, 3949; and a saltpit in *Recog. Rolls*, 398.

In the Middle Ages, the salt-producing towns were called collectively the Wiches, and the term usually covered three centres of production, namely Nantwich, Middlewich and Northwich. Of these, the first passed, after the Norman Conquest, to the Malbank family, and was usually known as Wich Malbank. In 1133, a fourth part of the town was granted by William Malbank to the abbot and convent of Combermere, and the remainder, in the course of the next three centuries, became minutely subdivided among various families. The other two wiches passed into the hands of the earl of Chester. They were transferred to the Crown with the earldom in 1237, and remained parts of the earl's estate throughout the period under consideration.

Little is known of the development of these towns during the two centuries following the Domesday Survey. They were all near the great forest area of Mara and Mondrem ; and Middlewich was also near Rudheath. This circumstance was no aid to prosperity. On the other hand, salt was a necessity of life, in constant demand, and when, in the reign of Edward I, more light becomes available, the wiches appear to be prosperous.

By this time, the industry was long established and its customs clearly defined. The process of manufacture was rudimentary, consisting simply in the evaporation of brine. Salthouses or wich-houses (*salinae*) had been erected, containing leaden pans (*plumbi*) in which the brine was boiled and the salt deposited. Crude as the process was, it would be erroneous to suppose that the product was very impure, for Cheshire brine is usually almost pure.

The number of salt pans or cauldrons or " leads " in a wich-house varied. In the fourteenth century, it was commonly four, six, eight or twelve, but there was already a tendency towards standardising the number. This tendency may have arisen from convenience of working or from the method of rating,[1] or from both circumstances. In any case, the number is always even and never exceeds twelve, and in the fifteenth century at Nantwich, twelve saltpans were deemed to constitute " an entire wich-house." [2]

The smaller salthouses in this town at this period invariably contained six leads, and such a house is not infrequently designated a " half wich-house." [3]

By the sixteenth century the tendency had hardened into custom. All the Nantwich salthouses contained six leads, and all the Middlewich

[1] *Vide infra*, 114. [2] *Book of the Abbot of Combermere*, 44, 49, 54.

[3] *Ibid.*, 23, 24, 33 (leases) ; 46, 49, 54, 55, 58, 61, 62, 64 (rents) ; *Recog. Rolls*, 413. Cf. also a grant to Richard de Fouleshurst of " half a saltwork with six chaldrons in le Wodestrete under one roof with the half saltwork of Nicholas Colfox " . . . *Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 6692 (date 1353). Again : Grant by Matthew de Fouleshurst to Thomas, son of John de Wetenhall of " half a saltwork with six pans lying with the half saltwork of the canons of St. John of Chester under one roof in the Wood Street " (date 1361), " Mainwaring " MS., 143.

houses six leads, while at Nantwich there were ten six-lead houses and the remainder contained only four leads.[1]

Fourteenth and fifteenth-century documents describe fairly clearly the location of many of the salthouses by reference to streets and neighbouring houses. They appear to have stood in the middle of the town and were probably quite close to the spring (or springs). The method of conveying brine from the spring to the leads is not indicated, but by the early sixteenth century, pipes were used at Nantwich and many of them crossed the river.[2] Concerning the process of evaporation also, there appears to be no contemporary account. Higden (who may well have been acquainted with the wiches), says briefly: "There beethe salt welles fer from the sea. . . . The water of these welles, whan hit is i-sode, torneth in to smal salte, faire and white."[3]

The fuel used for boiling the brine was, of course, wood. The supply was a matter of the highest importance[4] for large quantities were needed,[5] and wood and turves figure prominently in the lists of tolls of the period.[6] Occasionally the salthouses themselves caught fire. For example, in 1306-1307 some cinders thrown between two saltpits in Northwich gave rise to a great fire which destroyed sixty-five saltpits, and damaged a water-mill and some corn and malt stored in it. The extent of the damage was so great that the abbot of Vale Royal who at that time held the town at ferm for £76, was allowed a remission of £25 2s. od. in recompense for his losses.[7]

The abbot was not alone in his interest in the salt industry, for many salthouses had been granted to the monasteries of Cheshire and the neighbouring counties. In Nantwich alone, in addition to the large area belonging to the abbey of Combermere,[8] there were salthouses

[1] See two interesting documents printed in Cooke's *Bibliotheca Cestriensis* (folio edn.), 204, 210, 216. Mr. L. F. Salzman also kindly lent me two extracts from "Excheq. Deputy Com.," 32-33 Eliz., which point to the prevalence of the six lead house at Nantwich in the sixteenth century.

[2] "The pits be so set abowte with canales that the salte water is facily derived to every mannes house. And . . . very many canales go over Wyver river for the commodity of deriving the water to the salter's troughs," Leland, *Itinerary* (ed. L. T. Smith), IV, 4.

[3] *Polychronicon*, II, 23 (Trevisa's translation). Higden is describing the wonders of Britain and not referring specifically to Cheshire. More detail is found in Leland's description of the process used at Nantwich in his time: "They sette the salte water in furnaces of lede, and lede out the salte, some in cases of wiker, through the wich the water voydeth and the salte remaynith" (*Itinerary*, IV, 4).

[4] An inquisition in 1365 points to the stoppage of a source of supply which the salters of Northwich had long used. "Assize Rolls," Chester, 25/4 in 17.

[5] Leland refers to the "great stacks of small cloven wood to seethe the salt that they make white salt of" (*Itinerary*, IV, 4). In 1605 it was calculated that the sum of £5219 14s. was spent yearly in wood in the three wiches. Cooke, *Bibliotheca Cestriensis*, 216. See also *V.C.H., Worcestershire*, 21, 256.

[6] *Vide infra*, 117.

[7] *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1349), No. 28; *C.Cl. R.* (1307-1313), 103.

[8] Dugdale, *Monasticon*, V, 323; *Book of the Abbot of Combermere, passim.*

belonging to the abbey of St. Werburgh (Chester),[1] the abbey of St. Mary (Chester),[2] the abbey of Lilleshall,[3] the priory of Wenlock,[4] the priory of Birkenhead [5] and the hospital of St. John (Chester).[6] The abbey of Stanlaw had land both in Northwich and Nantwich ; [7] the abbey of Shrewsbury [8] and the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem [9] had land in Middlewich ; the abbey of Vale Royal had saltpans in Middlewich and Northwich ; [10] the abbey of Basingwerk had a saltpit in Northwich,[11] while four Staffordshire houses (Burton, St. Thomas's (Stafford), Dieulacres and Ronton) had saltpans in the Wiches.[12]

Lay owners or holders were even more numerous and more diverse in status. Among the proprietors of salthouses, lands or messuages in the Wiches were the Duke of Lancaster [13] and many of the wealthy county families (Venables, Duttons, Warburtons, Bulkeleys, Vernons, Dones, Baggeleghs, etc.),[14] while a large number of lesser people rented or leased property from the lay or monastic owners.[15]

The value of the salthouses thus rented varied widely. The site of the house, the number and condition of the pans, the distance the brine had to be brought, these must have been the principal factors in determining the rent. One salthouse belonging to the Lacy family was rented at £1 in 1300.[16] Three belonging to the abbot of Vale Royal were stated in 1334 to have been worth £1 each,[17] and one belonging to the duke of Lancaster was leased in 1367 for eight years at 36s. 8d. per annum.[18] On the other hand, the abbot of Vale Royal had two pans (in Middlewich) worth half a mark yearly (1291),[19] Mathew Fouleshurst had a salthouse worth 30d. a year,[20] and there were salthouses worth as little as 6d. a year [21] or even declared to be of no value.[22]

Salt itself was relatively dear in the Middle Ages. It was in great demand, but the method of production was wasteful, the cost of distribution was high and the salt was often of inferior quality. The

[1] *Monasticon*, II, 385. [2] *C.P.R.* (1399-1401), 302.
[3] *Book of the Abbot of Combermere*, 34, 38, 39.
[4] *Ibid.*, 38. [5] " Mainwaring " MS., 140.
[6] Ormerod, I, 350-351. This hospital had a saltpit in Northwich, also " Eaton " MS., Edward I/15. [7] *Whalley Abbey Coucher Book*, II, 482.
[8] *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVIII, 60.
[9] " Eaton " MS., Edward, I/5.
[10] *V.R.L. Book*, 63, 113. One of the saltpans belonging to Vale Royal abbey had been acquired by purchase—not by grant. [11] *Recog. Rolls*, 25.
[12] Hibbert, *Monasticism in Staffordshire*, 113.
[13] See a long *Quo Warranto* in Ormerod, I, 703-705. The Duke, of course, had the Cheshire estates of the Lacy family, which included a salt house in Northwich, *De Lacy Compoti*, 143.
[14] Ormerod, III, 161 ; " Tatton Papers " (MS.), 27.
[15] *Book of the Abbot of Combermere*, 44, 46, 49 ; *Recog. Rolls*, 14, 49, 206, 296, 301. [16] *De Lacy Compoti*, 143. [17] *V.R.L. Book*, 113.
[18] " Ministers' Accounts," 4/32. [19] Ibid., 63.
[20] " Additional Rolls," 27408. [21] *Recog. Rolls*, 14.
[22] *Ibid.*, 206, 301.

abundance and excellence of Cheshire brine might have proved the foundation of a great industry had the means of communication been better. The Weaver, however, appears to have been unnavigable,[1] and Cheshire roads were as bad as those elsewhere. Accordingly, salt was imported on a considerable scale, especially from France,[2] and even low quality brine in other counties was evaporated and the product used for salting meat each autumn.

Nevertheless, the Cheshire salt must have been carted long distances. The working of so many salthouses indicates a degree of production which must have far exceeded the needs of the immediate neighbourhood. Evidence of distribution is scanty, as might be expected, for the cartage of salt, whether by owner or purchaser, did not necessitate the use of documents, and its removal may have proceeded as regularly as the removal of marl from the marlpits, or fuel from the woods, with as little notice in contemporary records. Moreover, the division of the barony of Nantwich resulted in the absence of any complete record of values of the salthouses in the largest of the wiches. Nevertheless, salt was indispensable ; neighbouring counties had very inadequate supplies ; and the inference that Cheshire was the source from which some, at least, of their supplies was drawn, is strengthened by a number of factors.

In the first place, the system of tolls on the sale of salt recorded in Domesday, shows that provision was made for purchasers who came from a distance. The tolls were graded according as the purchaser lived in the same hundred, in another hundred or another shire. They included also the dealer " who carted salt about the said county to sell."[3]

Further, from an early date the Welsh obtained salt from the Cheshire wiches. Nantwich was called Nant yr Heledd Wen (stream of the white saltpit),[4] and it was with a view to distressing the Welsh that Henry III in 1245 ordered a stoppage of the salt working in that town.[5] An interesting sidelight on the relation between Nantwich and North Wales is thrown by two deeds recording an exchange of certain lands in Bulkeley and Peckforton in 1314. The boundary of one portion of land is called " Walesmonswey " in the first document and " Walchmonstreete " in the second. The significance of these names becomes apparent when it is observed that the road referred to lies on

[1] I have found no record of ships passing up the Weaver beyond Frodsham bridge in the Middle Ages. The important waterway which now links Winsford and Northwich with the Mersey (the " Weaver Navigation ") was constructed by canal engineers.

[2] See Unwin, *Finance and Trade*, 257, 265 ; Rogers, *Six Centuries* (14th edn., 1919), 96-97.

[3] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 224-225.

[4] *Arch. Camb.*, IV, vii, 91-93, *n.* 3.

[5] Ormerod, I, lxxi.

Photograph by F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.

NANTWICH CHURCH, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

the direct route from Nantwich to Farndon (where the Dee was bridged) and thence to Wales.[1]

Moreover, the names of other roads bear testimony to the trade in salt. A road at Over was called the Saltersway.[2] The road from Hoole Heath to Shotwick—a military road to the Dee estuary and to Wales—was called Saltersway,[3] while two roads in the north-east of Cheshire leading from the neighbouring counties were known as Saltersgate,[4] and another as Saltersford.[5]

Finally the high value of the farm of Middlewich and of Northwich is evidence of a prosperous industry.[6] While, therefore, documentary evidence of specific sales is scarce, indirect evidence points to the conclusion that the industry was of great importance not only to the immediate neighbourhood of the Weaver valley, but to the whole county and indeed the neighbouring counties. And it is noteworthy that in the requisitions for war in Scotland in 1308, the justice of Chester was ordered to furnish 200 quarters of salt, while no other county furnished any at all.[7]

The sale of salt enriched the earl as well as the manufacturers, for the earl received toll on all salt carried from the wiches. Before the Conquest, the tolls had been shared between the king and the earl in the proportion of two to one. At that time, the charges were as follows :—

Northwich.[8]

Cart with 2 oxen from another shire	4d.
,, ,, 2 ,, ,, Cheshire	2d.
Horseload from another shire	1d.
,, ,, Cheshire	a minuta.

Nantwich and Middlewich.[9]

Cart with 4 oxen or more	4d.
,, ,, 2 ,, ,,	2d.
Horseload from another hundred	2d.
,, ,, same ,,	½d.
8 men's loads from another hundred	2d.
8 ,, ,, same ,,	1d.

and 15 boilings were reckoned as one horseload.[10]

[1] Ormerod, II, 649. The deeds are printed as footnotes to the section on Bulkeley, but the editor apparently did not observe that this boundary was important in relation to Nantwich.

[2] *V.R.L. Book*, 95.

[3] "Harl." MS. 2057/123. See also Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, 51, 53.

[4] Tait, *Mediæval Manchester*, 94.

[5] *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 170. Cf. also "saltersiche" in "Campbell" MS., XXVIII, 2.

[6] *Vide infra*, 118, 120.

[7] *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 81. The abundance of salt may also perhaps be the reason for calling upon Cheshire to supply 400 bacon hogs—a greater number than that ordered from any other county.

[8] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 224-225.

[9] *Ibid.*, 222.

[10] *Ibid.*, 219.

Whether these customs were paid in this form in the reigns of the three Edwards is not clear. In any case, important changes had taken place. The sharing of the tolls between the king and the earl had ended when the Conqueror transferred his rights to the first earl; the grant of Nantwich to the Malbanks had deprived the earl of any share in the tolls of Nantwich; and certain new customs had been imposed.

One such custom levied at Middlewich and Northwich was "stuth," a charge of 2d. a load on each cartload of turf or brushwood entering the town for sale.[1] Possibly this toll was levied only on fuel used in the boiling of salt. At any rate large quantities of fuel were needed for this purpose, and many of the holders or owners of saltpans would have no adequate supply save by purchase. The weight of the toll, therefore, must have fallen largely on the salt industry. A second custom was Ernesilver, a charge paid by merchants buying salt.[2] The amount of the charge is not stated, and it may have varied (as in Domesday) according to the locality from which the purchaser came. A third custom was Hurdlesalt, a charge of 1d. a week between the feasts of the Ascension and of St. Martin, on every four saltpans, certain tenants being exempted.[3]

The value of these customs may best be seen in tabular form :—

[1] The use of the word stuth is confusing. In the first place, *Stuth* is to be distinguished from "Sheriff's stuth" which was "a certain rent accustomed and collected in the five hundreds of the county of Cheshire at the feast of St. Martin." *Chamber. Accts.*, 133, 171. The word also occurs once in the *Recog. Rolls* (60), where seven men mentioning their military service with the Black Prince, and certain arrears of pay, petition to be enfranchised of the Town of Middlewich, rendering to the king as their chief "one penny yearly in the name of stuth." The men were living at the time in Middlewich, but the word has here no reference to the salt industry. Even where that industry is clearly concerned, there is some doubt, for while the Northwich accounts are clear, there appears to be an error in some of the Middlewich Accounts. In those for 1349-1350 and 1350-1351, stuth is defined in almost the same words as hurdlesalt, while in the accounts for 1353-1354 ("Eaton" MS., Edward III/110) and 1357-1358 ("Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 3), this strange definition of stuth is followed by "together with cart stuth, namely from each cartload of turf, etc. (as above)." Possibly the confusion is best explained on the hypothesis that the scribe of 1349-1350 made an error which was copied in 1350-1351, that the scribe of 1353-1354 knew of the error, did not correct it by omitting the erroneous words, but endeavoured to give a correct meaning by interpolating the words "together with cart stuth, etc."

[2] It was paid at Northwich, but apparently not at Middlewich. *Chamber. Accts.*, 144, 182.

[3] "Except tenants who have liberties as appears by the Court Rolls," *Chamber. Accts.*, 145, 146, 184. Since the value of the custom was not constant, it would seem to have been a tax on saltpans actually *in use*.

		Northwich.	*Middlewich.*
1349-50.[1]	Stuth	£1 2 1½	£1 13 10
	Hurdlesalt	—	6 12 11
	Ernesilver	0 13 4	—
1350-51 [2]	Stuth	0 10 0	1 8 11
	Hurdlesalt	—	5 16 7
	Ernesilver	2 7 8	—
1353-54 [3]	Stuth	1 4 0	1 8 8
	Hurdlesalt	—	5 17 11
	Ernesilver	1 7 0	—
1357-58.[4]	Stuth	1 16 0	1 13 4½
	Hurdlesalt	—	6 4 7
	Ernesilver	1 2 10½	—
1368-69.[5]	Stuth	1 16 0	2 4 9
	Hurdlesalt	—	7 10 10
	Ernesilver	1 12 10	—

These figures are drawn from a period when the value of the wiches had sunk low.[6]

In more prosperous times, the revenue accruing from the wiches was an important part of the earl's income,[7] and it is evident that the maintenance of that income necessitated some restriction of the common practice of granting exemption from tolls. Now the tolls levied in the wiches fall into two classes,—those paid by the maker of salt and those paid by the purchaser. In the first class, it is unusual to find exemptions. Two owners of salthouses, namely the duke of Lancaster,[8] and the abbot of Vale Royal,[9] claimed to be free of tolls, and certain tenants, as already stated, had liberties. All other makers appear to have paid toll.

In the second class, there is evidence of a definite policy of withholding such exemptions. Rights and privileges of various kinds were granted to the growing communities, but freedom from tolls in the

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 144-146.

[2] *Ibid.*, 182-184. Calculation based on the figures for hurdlesalt shows that there were over 250 saltpans in use at Middlewich in 1349-1350, and over 200 in use in 1350-1351.

[3] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/110.

[4] "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, mm. 2, 3.

[5] Ibid., 786/10, mm. 1, 3.

[6] See table, p. 120.

[7] For example in 1301-1302, the total receipts from the county were £1493 3s. 2d., while the farm of Northwich and Middlewich amounted to £168. The corresponding figures for 1305-1306 are £1701 19s. 5¼d., and £164. *Chamber. Accts.*, 2, 4, 76, 77.

[8] Ormerod, I, 705.

[9] The abbot refused to pay stuth and hurdlesalt in respect of his saltpans in Middlewich in 1275, and the men of the town complained to the king about the abbot's immunity. An inquiry was held and the loss to the town was estimated at 8 marks a year. The matter was settled by reducing the farm of the town by 4 marks. *V.R.L. Book*, 186; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, 303.

wiches was specifically excluded. The men of Macclesfield, for example, were granted quittance throughout Cheshire of " toll, passage, pontage, stallage and lastage and all other customs, save salt in the Wyches." [1] Similarly the men of Frodsham were free from tolls " except salt toll at Wich." [2] The same limitation is found in the privileges of Congleton,[3] Halton [4] and Stockport,[5] and in the charters of at least two boroughs which stood a little outside the county boundary, namely, Salford [6] and Leek.[7] It is evident, therefore, that the tolls were carefully guarded. Lucrative sources of revenue were not to be diminished by petty exemptions.

But the value of the wiches did not rest principally on the salt customs. There were other issues yielding larger sums, fluctuating in some measure with the fluctuating prosperity of the communities, but not directly derived from the salt industry itself. Among these are the issues of the mill, and of the lord's oven, the toll of the pix and the perquisites of the courts. At Northwich the yields are as follows :—

Date.	Perquisites of the Courts.	Toll of the Pix.	Issues of the Mill.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1349–50	11 16 4½	18 9 10½	5 15 1½ [8]
1350–51	13 18 7	16 3 5½	8 10 9½ [9]
1353–54	15 13 11¼	22 10 11	5 15 6½ [10]
1357–58	17 8 2½	26 13 0	13 11 8 [11]
1368–69	17 7 2	26 13 0	13 11 6 [12]

At Northwich and Middlewich there was a rent called Kyngesmol which produced more than £2 a year in each town, while at Middlewich there were perquisites of the fair and rents from the hall.

Standing on important highways, carrying on an ancient and indispensable industry, the three wiches enjoyed a quiet prosperity in the reign of Edward I. Nantwich (the largest of the three in the eleventh century and also in the sixteenth) [13] received a pavage charter in 1277,[14]

[1] Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, II, 459. The charter was granted in 1261 by Prince Edward as earl of Chester. It is printed (in Latin) in Ormerod, III, 740.
[2] Charter in Ormerod, II, 46. Inquisition in *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, II, Nos., 46, 53.
[3] Ormerod, I, 703-705. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid., III, 790-791 *n.*
[6] Tait, *Mediæval Manchester*, 92.
[7] *Deputy Keeper's Reports*, XXVII, Appendix, 103 (Charter of Randle, earl of Chester). On the general subject of partial freedom from toll, see Ballard and Tait, *British Borough Charters* (1216-1307), 263-266.
[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 144. Concerning the mill, *vide supra*, 37,
[9] *Ibid.*, 182. [10] " Eaton " MS., Edward III/110.
[11] " Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 2. [12] Ibid., 786/10, m. 3.
[13] See *Domesday*, and *Leland*, IV, 4.
[14] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 233 ; *ibid.* (1281-1292), 25.

and a grant of an annual fair in 1283,[1] while Middlewich had a weekly market and two fairs a year.[2]

About 1334 a hall measuring over 100 feet in length and 22 feet in breadth was erected for traders at Middlewich.[3] Stalls were rented and the issues for the period immediately after the Black Death reflect a rising prosperity.[4] A little further light is thrown on the trade of Northwich by the customs taken for the rebuilding of the bridge over the Weaver which had been destroyed by floods in 1351.[5] The customs include flour (by the crannock), cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, fleeces, hides, skins, fish, wine, clothes, nails, horseshoes, "ploughclutes," tin, brass, copper, white glass and coloured glass. On lead the charge was 2d. a cartload, on wood ½d. a cartload, while carts carrying brushwood paid only ½d. a week.[6]

That large quantities of fuel were needed for the staple industry is obvious; that hundreds of lead pans were in use in the three wiches is certain. But whether these pans were made locally cannot be determined. The rating of saltpans and the gradual standardising of the number of pans in a wich-house would in all probability lead to some standardising in the size of the pans. The making, setting up and repair of these pans might be regarded as a second and auxiliary industry, yet I have found no mention of a lead foundry or a plumber in the wiches, nor of the transport of pans or of lead from any other source—for example the mines of North Wales. Nor is this the only feature of interest concerning which evidence is lacking. The absence of information respecting the distribution of salt has already been mentioned.[7] Even the price of salt in Cheshire is seldom mentioned The Chamberlain bought a quantity in 1347-1348 for salting stags and does at 2s. a quarter;[8] the reeve of Eaton bought some in 1372-1373 for the servants' pottage at 10d. a bushel.[9] But the "Ministers' Accounts" both of the earldom of Chester and the duchy of Lancaster usually contain no reference to the purchase of salt, and it is possible

[1] Hall, *History of Nantwich*, 41. The fair was of three days' duration at the feast of St. Bartholomew.

[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 146. (Ascension Day and the feast of St. Luke.)

[3] *Recog. Rolls*, 374.

[4] They are

1349-50	16s. 9½d.
1350-51	15s. 4¾d.
1353-54	15s. 5½d.
1357-58	23s. 8½d.
1368-69	56s. 3½d.

Chamber. Accts., 145, 184, "Eaton" MS., Edward III/110, "Ministers' Accounts," 784/11, m. 3; 786/10 m1.

[5] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 82. For the repairs see *Chamber. Accts.*, 207, 222.

[6] "Enrolments," Chester, 2/36, m. 6d.

[7] *Vide supra*,, 112.

[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 126.

[9] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101. For the prices of salt elsewhere, see Thorold Rogers, *Hist. Agriculture*, II, 409 *et seq.*; 457 *et seq.*

that the bailiffs obtained it without payment from salthouses belonging to their lords.

A further important line of inquiry touches the organisation of the industry for purposes of sale. Was the manufacturer himself a retail dealer? How far was the sale of salt in the hands of merchants? Here, again, the evidence is of a most fragmentary character. Domesday refers to the dealer "who carted salt about the country to sell."[1] Ernesilver is stated to be a custom paid by "merchants buying salt."[2] Both Domesday and a letter of the Black Prince[3] refer to men coming from other counties to the wiches to buy salt. Such men were in all probability buying to sell again. So far the evidence points to the existence of a class of dealers, but whether owners of wich-houses themselves sold their salt retail either in the wiches or in the county, or elsewhere is not clear.[4]

These gaps in the sources of our knowledge are regrettable. On the other hand, a fairly continuous series of figures relating to the wiches between 1300 and 1360 can be compiled. At the beginning of the reign of Edward I, Middlewich was farmed at £100[5]—a high figure for the farm of Chester was only £100—and in 1301 Northwich was farmed at £76.[6] During the fourteenth century, however, the farm of both Middlewich and Northwich declined.[7] Since the county enjoyed peace and a fair measure of prosperity, this decline deserves consideration. It is probably not to be explained by a cheapening of salt,[8] nor as a direct result of the destructive fire at Northwich in 1306, for although there was an immediate loss of revenue, the issues of the vill were farmed at £73 in 1310.[9] It is, however, possible that the destruction of the saltworks may have diverted some of the normal trade to Nantwich, and that buyers did not return to Northwich when the works were restored. It is possible, moreover, that the Weaver and the Dane wrought some destruction in the salt workings. A clause in a grant of Northwich mill refers to the possibility of damage by floods[10]—a not uncommon condition—and the Chamberlain's Account for 1347-1348 shows that measures had had to be taken to safeguard the saltpits against the waters of the Dane.[11] An explanation may also be

[1] *Vide supra*, 113. [2] *Vide supra*, 114. [3] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 95.

[4] The records throw very little light also on the question of other industries in the wiches. I have, however, noted a number of dyers—two at Nantwich: "Assize Roll," Chester, 17/1, and one "Ricardus Tinctor de Wyco," who was charged with unjustly keeping cloth at Chester. "Chester" MS.—Portmote Roll, 1311-1325.

[5] *V.R.L. Book*, 186.

[6] *Chamber. Accts.*, 2.

[7] See table at end of chapter, p. 120.

[8] I have studied the prices of salt for the period 1300-1360 in Roger's *Hist. Agriculture*, II, 412 *et seq.*, and find no evidence of declining value.

[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 1.

[10] *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 303. The bridge had been destroyed by floods in 1351. *Vide supra*, 117.

[11] *Chamber. Accts.*, 124.

sought in the changing attitude of mind towards Wales. The conquest and settlement of that region had opened up the mineral deposits of Flintshire to enterprising Cheshire dealers. It was Flintshire rather than Cheshire that was now the ground for speculators.[1] Finally, it is possible that other salt deposits in neighbouring counties were being worked and that the sales of Cheshire salt declined, or that the salt-works at Nantwich enjoyed increased prosperity at the expense of those at Northwich and Middlewich. In the absence of statistics relating to Nantwich, no final conclusion can be reached.

Two further observations on the figures may be made, though here again it is difficult to offer an adequate explanation. In the first place, while Domesday shows that in the late eleventh century, Northwich was more valuable than Middlewich, by the fourteenth century the relative positions had been reversed. Now Middlewich had no apparent advantage of geographical position over its neighbour. The two towns are about equidistant from Chester. In respect of traders from the north, the advantage lay with Northwich ; while Nantwich offered the most accessible source for traders from the south. The reason for the greater growth of Middlewich must remain in large measure a matter for conjecture. Some greater density or more copious supply of brine may have cheapened production ; fuel may have been more readily obtainable ; some other industry may have arisen ; the presence of the hundred courts and the periodic visit of the justice in eyre may have increased the importance of Middlewich—as indeed the erection of the traders' hall would suggest. In any case the primacy had gone to Middlewich. In the second place, while the varying values of the two towns show a considerable degree of correspondence, the variations in the case of Middlewich are the more pronounced. Of this I can offer no explanation.

Concerning Nantwich, of course, no figures are available, but it seems likely that Nantwich was now—as in Domesday times—the largest of the three wiches, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries its old time leadership is undoubted.[2]

Some further thoughts on the wider aspects of the trade may be added. In comparison with the complexity of modern trade, mediæval trade appears simple. It would, however, be erroneous to exaggerate this simplicity. During considerable periods, conditions might undergo

[1] See Chapter V, pp. 84-86.

[2] Leland (*Itinerary*, IV, 4) states that Nantwich has more brine than the other three wiches (he includes Congleton as well as Northwich and Middlewich). Statistics in 1605 are as follows :

Nantwich	216 salthouses of 6 leads.			
Middlewich	107	,,	,, 6 ,,	and 1 house of 4 leads.
Northwich	113	,,	,, 4 ,,	

Cooke, *Bibliotheca Cestriensis*, 216.

THE VALUES OF NORTHWICH AND MIDDLEWICH.

Date.	Northwich.				Middlewich.			Reference.
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	
1270		—			100	0	0	*V.R.L. Book*, 186
1295	65	0	0			—		Ormerod, III, 158
1301	76	0	0		92	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.*, 2
1302	76	0	0		90	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.* 10
1303		—			88	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.*, 38
1305	70	0	0		88	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.*, 76
1309		—			93	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 486
1310	73	0	0			—		*Recog. Rolls*, 1
1315	40	0	0			—		*Chamber. Accts.*, 83
1320	76	0	0		84	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 472, *Chamber. A.*, 89-90
1325	40	12	2	(Farmer defaulted)				*Chamber. Accts.*, 95
1320	"In the king's hands for lack of farmers"							*Chamber. Accts.*, 104
1330	26 marks.					—		*Recog. Rolls*, 70
1331	52	0	0		51	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 486, 70
1332	52	0	0		60	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 486, 70
1334	Joint figure £126 13s. 4d. for the two vills							*Chamber. Accts.*, 112
1335	58	13	4			—		*Recog. Rolls*, 197
1336					34 (a moiety only)	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 486
1339	60	0	0			—		*Recog. Rolls*, 197
1343	57	0	0			—		*Recog. Rolls*, 197
1344	57	0	0		17 (a fourth part)	0	0	*Recog. Rolls*, 461, 472
1345	57	0	0					
1346	60	0	0			—		*Recog. Rolls*, 449
1347	60	0	0		70	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.*, 120
1350	37	3	0[1]		39	4	0	*Chamb. Accts.*, 160[1]
1353	46	8	0[1]		41	18	0½	*Chamb. Accts.*, 206[1]
1354	64	9	5½[1]		48	2	0	*Chamb. Accts.*, 222[1]
1356		—			50	0	0	*Chamber. Accts.*, 232
1357		—			50	0	0	Ministers' Accts., 784/11, m. 3
1368	44	19	9[1]			—		Ministers' Accts., 786/10, m. 3.

little change and prices remain fairly steady, but no amount of human regulation could control all the circumstances to which trade was sensitive. We have already pointed out that bad communications limited the range of the Cheshire salt trade. It is possible that its range was also influenced by a wider factor. During the reigns of the three Edwards, there grew a considerable trade between Gascony and Chester.[2]

[1] Not let to farm in these years. The figures quoted are the values of the issues rendered by the bailiff.

[2] *Vide infra*, 136-138.

Now Gascony was a region of cheap salt production,[1] and ship-owners may have found their interests conflicting with the interests of owners of wich-houses. I have found no evidence of Gascon salt being imported at Chester; but did the ships which brought wine to the ports of North Wales and to Liverpool also bring salt to regions previously supplied from the Cheshire wiches? Further, it is commonly supposed that salt was exported from Chester to Dublin. Did the Gascony trade bring French salt to Dublin and thus diminish Chester's export? These questions suggest a line for a wider inquiry than I have been able to prosecute.

[1] Cf. Unwin, *Finance and Trade*, 257.

CHESTER
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
Quarter Mile
N
To Shotwick & Dee Estuary
To Warrington
Water Tower
St John's Hospital
North Gate
Northgate St.
Parson's Lane
Abbey of St Werburgh
Bernard St.
Grey Friars
Trinity Church
St Peter's Church & Perthce
Cross
East Gate
Cow Lane
Foregate Street
BOUGHTON
To Northwich
To Nantwich
To Aldford and Holt
Water Gate
Watergate St.
Black Friars (?)
Eastgate St.
Newgate Street
St Nicholas Lane
White Friars
Bridge St.
White Friars Lane
St Michael's Church
THE ROODEE
Pepper St.
New Gate
St John's Church
Cuppings Lane
Nuns Lane
Souter's Lane
REDCLIFF
River Dee
Castle Lane
Rood Cross
St Mary's Nunnery
Glovers Lane
St Mary de Castro
CASTLE
Dee Mills
Bridge Gate
Causeway
Fulling Mills
Bridge
HANDBRIDGE
To Mold & North Wales

CHAPTER VIII.

CHESTER.

The site of Chester had several of those attributes which made for the growth of an important mediæval trading centre. Its position in a bend of the Dee rendered it easily defensible; it lay on the natural highway connecting the midlands of England with the Irish Sea and Ireland; it stood at the last practicable crossing of a navigable river. When a bridge and fortifications had been erected, it was certain that a town would rise. When that town assumed the character of a border fortress, became the centre of government of a county palatine, and the seat of a great monastery, it was bound to attain some importance.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Domesday reveals at Chester a town which, though relatively small, was by far the largest for many miles, a community with well-defined customs, a port through which trade was conducted with Ireland. In the succeeding centuries, Chester grew. Directly and indirectly, the Norman Conquest had increased its political, military and ecclesiastical importance. Its earls were not unmindful of its commercial development. Its market and annual fair rapidly rose in importance, and a monk of St. Werburgh's abbey, writing about 1200 left an interesting account of the town in his day. The course of the Dee differed a little at that date from its present course, and the Roodeye was washed daily by the tide. The river abounded with fish,[1] and to the port came ships from Aquitaine, Spain, Ireland and Germany, bearing wine and other merchandise.[2] The market, held in the middle of the town, received large supplies of goods especially of food, and men brought articles for sale from long distances.[3] The English brought corn, the Welsh brought cattle and meat, the Irish brought fish,[4] Chester held the keys of Ireland, and travellers to and from that land used to rest or wait at the abbey of St. Werburgh.[5] The region surrounding the town was fertile, and the Welsh, driven by hunger, used to approach this district of greater plenty, but withdrew, not daring to attack.[6]

Meanwhile the growing English interest in the affairs of Ireland was leading to increased traffic from the Dee estuary across the Irish Sea.

[1] *Liber Luciani*, 46. [2] *Ibid.*, 46. [3] *Ibid.*, 47, 62.
[4] *Ibid.*, 44. [5] *Ibid.*, 58. [6] *Ibid.*, 52.

As early as 1164, Henry II assembled ships from Dublin at Chester with a view to crossing the channel,[1] and although the first English settlers in Ireland did not start from Chester, the town became and remained throughout the Middle Ages the chief port of embarkation of troops for Ireland, and was second only to Bristol in the volume of its Irish trade.

A series of charters granted in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries reflects the growing prosperity both of the town and the port. The citizens had their gild merchant, the exclusive right of trading in the city, and various regulations governing business transactions, disputes with Welshmen being specifically mentioned. Other charters refer to the customs observed in the Chester–Dublin trade in the days of Henry I and confirm and enlarge the citizens' privilege in their trading relations with Ireland.[2]

It is evident, therefore, that at the opening of the reign of Edward I, Chester had already attained considerable importance. During the reigns of the three Edwards, it reached its zenith. By the end of the fourteenth century it had begun to decline.

Progress and decay were alike closely connected with the political history of North Wales. Edward's conquest and settlement of that land was not wholly advantageous to Chester. Peace and security were welcome, and at first brought prosperity, but the permanence of the settlement ultimately deprived Chester of its military and political importance. There was, however, no immediate decline, and certainly no immediate diminution in the care of the city's defences. The walls were maintained in good condition—their massive masonry astonished Higden [3]—and repairs at the castle were almost continuous.[4]

But the peace permitted expansion, and the town was spreading beyond the two-mile circumference of its walls. Houses were built outside the Northgate, across the river in Handbridge, and especially in Foregate Street ; [5] and the city's bounds extended to Heron Bridge, to Hoole and to Saltney.[6] Outside the walls also stood two hospitals—St. John's for poor people, near the Northgate,[7] and St. Giles' for lepers at Boughton.[8]

Within the walls were houses of the Black, White and Grey Friars, the nunnery of St. Mary, and the abbey of St. Werburgh. In addition to the area occupied by the buildings and offices of these religious houses, the town also contained a number of houses and shops belonging to the abbot of St. Werburgh's, to the prioress of St. Mary's, to the

[1] *Brut y Tywysogion*, 203.
[2] Morris (*Doc.*), 480-486.
[3] *Polychronicon*, II, 76, 78, 80.
[4] See Chapter VI, 96-100.
[5] *Ancient Deeds*, VI, Nos. C6335, C6339, C6341; *ibid.*, Vol. III, C3653, C3356.
[6] Morris (*Doc.*), 497.
[7] *Recog. Rolls*, II, 163, 239, 263, 316, 327, 338.
[8] *Ibid.*, 46, 133, 144.

abbot of Stanlaw (Whalley) and the abbot of Vale Royal.[1] The power of the church, therefore, was great, but not greater than was common in mediæval towns.

The internal history of Chester at this period has been written by the late Canon Morris. It is, however, desirable to consider certain aspects of the city from an angle rather different from that taken by Canon Morris. In particular, it is necessary to study the economic position of Chester in respect of supplies, in relation to the great abbey of St. Werburgh, and finally in relation to maritime trade.

As a market town of considerable importance, Chester needed supplies of food, fuel and miscellaneous merchandise. Situated in the border land, she could procure supplies as easily from Wales as from England, while the Dee enabled her to obtain goods readily from overseas. Of flesh meat there was no dearth in the immediate neighbourhood. The citizens had common of pasture for their cattle on Hoole Heath at all times of the year,[2] and cattle were brought from Wales in times of war as well as of peace.[3] The Cheshire forests, moreover, provided pannage for many pigs;[4] sheep were fairly numerous at the monastic granges, and small cheeses were made in the county.

Corn, on the other hand, was not so plentiful. Wheat, barley, oats and rye were of course grown in the county,[5] and wheat for seed was sold in Chester,[6] but it was necessary to import corn from Ireland and from England, and imported corn was subject to a toll at the city gate.[7]

Fish was very plentiful. All along the Dee there were fisheries, and salmon were abundant.[8] Several religious houses had fishing boats on the Dee, and the farm of the fishery of Dee bridge was very valuable.[9] The monks of St. Werburgh's abbey had also fishing rights round Anglesey[10] and in the sea around the Isle of Man,[11] and a good deal of fish was brought into the port in private boats. Tolls were levied at all the city gates on fish, and the lists include herrings, salmon, ray, oysters, whelks and eels.[12]

Finally, supplies of beer were brewed in the town; quantities of

[1] The Vale Royal property included a house and thirteen shops (*V.R.L. Book*, 131). In the absence of statistics relating to the fourteenth century, a search in the "Rentals and Surveys" of the sixteenth century shows that in 1526 the priory of St. Mary's had seventy tenants within the walls and fifty in Handbridge, the suburb across the Dee (Rentals and Surveys, Roll 119, P.R.O., printed in *Chester Arch. Society's Journal*, N.S., Vol. XIII).

[2] *Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVIII, Appendix 36; Ormerod, II, 813.

[3] *Vide supra*, 54, 84.

[4] *Chamber. Accts., passim.* Boys were employed to drive pigs from Delamere to Chester, *ibid.*, 9.

[5] *Ibid.*, 193, 194.

[6] *Ibid.*, 198.

[7] Morris (*Doc.*), 555.

[8] *Polychronicon*, II, 26; *Liber Luciani*, 46; *Giraldus*, VI, 139; *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 109.

[9] *Chamber. Accts.*, 102, 111.

[10] Dugdale, II, 385.

[11] "Harl." MS. 2071/62a.

[12] Morris (*Doc.*), 555.

wine were imported from Gascony; the abbot perfected his domestic arrangements by the laying of a water conduit along the highway from Newton's well to the abbey (1278),[1] and plums, pears, blackberries, nuts, partridges, woodcocks and other birds were found in the surrounding country.

Fuel was not lacking in mediæval Cheshire. The timber in the royal forests was most carefully preserved,[2] but brushwood and deadwood from the forests, from Shotwick park and from Loitcoit were sold to dealers.[3] Moreover, the barons had the right to dispose of deadwood on their own land at will.[4] Since, however, there were no extensive woods in the immediate neighbourhood of Chester, cartage was an important matter, and when it became necessary to improve the road surface in the town, funds were raised by a pavage of a halfpenny on every cartload of firewood or coals.[5] One of the chief sources of supply lay at Kinnerton, where the citizens were granted permission to take timber and make charcoal.[6] Another source was Shotwick park from which a Chester baker bought 10,000 faggots in 1347.[7]

Turves also occur in the lists of tolls at three of the city gates. They were cut in many of the marshy places in the county,[8] and the abbot of Chester had the right to take thirty cartloads of turf each year from Elton Moss.[9] Finally, as the mines of Eulowe were worked more extensively, quantities of "sea coal" were brought into Chester.[10]

In addition to fuel and food for the citizens, hay, grass and bedding were brought in for the cattle, and certain miscellaneous articles for sale or manufacture. As enumerated in the lists of tolls,[11] these articles are not very numerous or very diverse. The lists, however, can hardly be complete catalogues of goods entering the city, for an inquisition in 1321 showed that certain goods should be exempt from tolls; and further, the lists include such comprehensive items as a "horseload of merchandise of any kind." On the other hand, life was rude,

[1] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 279. Morris mentions arrangements for bringing water from a spring at Christleton to the abbey (*Chester*, 281-282), and "Harl." MS. 2071/90c contains a transcript of a letter about the same subject in 13 Edward I.

[2] *Vide supra*, 92.

[3] *Recog. Rolls*, 101, 102, 104, 432, 13, 20, 110, 67; *Chamber. Accts.*, 202, 222.

[4] *Chester Chartulary*, 102.

[5] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 311.

[6] *Ibid.*, 235. The abbot of St. Werburgh had licence to take timber and brushwood from this source for a short period. *Ibid.*, 255.

[7] *Chamber. Accts.*, 122.

[8] For example: Frodsham (*Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. II, Nos. 46, 53); Delamere (*Chamber. Accts.*, 130, 169; *Recog. Rolls*, 140, 453); Wirral (Ormerod, II, 441). Leland surmised that some of the many pools in Cheshire had gathered where turves had been cut. (*Itinerary*, IV, 2.)

[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 515.

[10] Morris (*Doc.*), 561.

[11] *Ibid.*, 554-562. There is also a further list of duties (granted for the repair of the walls and pavement) on pp. 562-564. This list, however, was only granted for a short period and although it contains a number of new articles (e.g., various kinds of cloth), it cannot be quoted with the same confidence.

requirements were few, transport was difficult, and manufactured articles were made within the city rather than brought from a distance. The recognisances made before the mayor reveal sales of wine, wool, cloth and grain.[1] Salt, of course, was needed. It came in at the Eastgate and was measured for purposes of toll by the crannock and the bushel. Knives, spoons, and a few other finished articles in iron and lead were brought. There were also dishes, earthenware, ropes and cords, baskets, bows and bow sticks, skins and furs and sacks of wool. Further, there were the materials—chiefly of wood—needed for the building and repair of houses, the making of vehicles, agricultural implements and horse-gear. In this class are nails, boards, posts, laths, fellies, spokes, cart-wheels, cart-yokes, ox-bows, axle-trees, cart-saddles, etc. Finally there was bark (for the tanners) which came into the port [2] as well as from the Cheshire forests.[3]

As already stated, these lists do not necessarily represent all classes of goods coming into Chester. Doubtless a greater diversity was to be seen at the annual fair held for three days at the feast of St. John the Baptist. The right to hold this fair had been granted by Earl Hugh Lupus to the abbey.[4] Earl Randle Gernons in confirming the right, had permitted the erection of traders' booths in front of the abbey gate, and allowed the monks to make these booths and let them for hire. Traders were forbidden to buy or sell anything anywhere else during the time of the fair,[5] and the abbot had ample powers to enforce his rights.[6] He had also certain tolls which included the following :—

For	every	horse	sold	.	.	4d.
,,	,,	ox	,,	.	.	2d.
,,	,,	5 sheep	,,	.	.	1d.
,,	,,	3 pigs	,,	.	.	4d.
,,	,,	sack of wool	sold	.	.	4d.

payment of the tolls on the animals (but not on the wool) being divided equally between the seller and the buyer. He had, moreover, tolls on food and merchandise sold, and to increase his revenue still further, the unloading or selling of goods from ships entering the port during the fair was restricted.[7]

It is evident, therefore, that the abbey had a powerful influence in the economic life of the city. Since the abbot took the tolls, his interest lay in enlarging the fair. Since, however, he had a monopoly of the

[1] "Chester" MS., B12 (date 1341-1342), Portmote Roll, 1314-1315.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 93, 104, 121, 128, 208, 263.
[3] *Recog. Rolls*, 21, 325, 459.
[4] Dugdale, II, 385.
[5] Morris (*Chester*), 122.
[6] See a plea to a writ *quo warranto*, 31 Edward III, printed in Ormerod, I, 287-288.
[7] *Ibid.*

sales, the citizens might justly contend that the fair would be of greater advantage to the city, if the citizens had greater freedom in selling their goods. This conflict of interests led to an appeal to Edward I, who ordered an inquiry into the whole situation.[1] In 1288, a settlement was reached by which the citizens were allowed to erect booths for themselves and for hire, provided they were away from the open space in front of the abbey gate. The abbot further conceded the right of stallage in fair time to the citizens for 46s. 8d. a year.[2]

These concessions enabled the monks to escape the odium which necessarily fell on all who hindered the economic progress of the city. The existence of the abbey was not wholly advantageous to the city. The annual fair was beneficial to the city's trade, but it is certain that had there been no abbey in Chester, the citizens would have secured the right to hold a fair of their own at an earlier date than they secured this limited control. The large area occupied by the abbey—almost a quarter of the space within the city walls—remained outside the authority of the mayor and corporation down to the Reformation. The abbey, moreover, was wealthy and influential. It was in a position to render the Crown valuable service, and to look for valuable favours in return. Its independence was advanced in 1345 when it secured exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.[3] Enjoying ample revenues and lucrative rights, having its own mills,[4] its own court, and its own postern gate in the city walls,[5] it had a prestige and power which the municipality was obliged to respect.

That serious conflicts were infrequent at a time when the fetters of monastic privilege were keenly resented, is probably due to the character of the abbots, to the fact that the earl of Chester was king of England (or prince of Wales), and to the fact that the abbey's estates, though near to Chester, were not actually contiguous to the city boundaries. There had been conflicts between the monks and citizens during the years 1258-1265,[6] and there were occasional disputes during the period under consideration, but for the most part, contemporary records afford little evidence of the recurrent, bitter hostility exhibited elsewhere between cities and monastic bodies.[7] Hospitality was maintained on a considerable scale, and the production of the mystery plays must have brought some measure of goodwill to the monks. In the fourteenth century neither the abbots nor the monks were austere, and if their manner of life commanded less esteem, it made fraternal relations

[1] "Harl." MS. 2071/89h. [2] Morris (*Chester*), 123.

[3] The exemption was the subject of much controversy. It was revoked in 1363, but the revocation was annulled in 1392, *Calendar of Papal Letters* (1362-1404), 88, 451. [4] "Harl." MS. 2071/94c.; Morris (*Chester*), 27.

[5] *Deputy Keeper's Reports*, XXVII, Appendix 119.

[6] *Annales Cestrienses*, 86-96.

[7] Cf. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, 162-163.

with the citizens easier. An episcopal visitation[1] in 1323 revealed a condition which, while hardly scandalous, was nevertheless far from the monastic ideal. The abbot was too busy to hear confessions. The monks were keeping hunting dogs. Two of the monks had been guilty of incontinence and a third was suspected. There had been some trickery or collusion in the distribution of alms and there was considerable slackness in the discipline. Such a condition in a monastery was not uncommon in the fourteenth century, and probably the laity were not greatly scandalised.

In the succeeding half century the internal life of the abbey degenerated still further, but while its moral prestige waned, its wealth remained undiminished. Its great revenues were regularly collected, its tenants were kept in subjection, its abbots busied themselves with the development of their estates,[2] and the great institution remained a powerful influence in the city's and indeed the county's economic life.

But the day had passed when a monastery represented the only great accumulation of wealth within a mediæval city. Trade was already an important source of wealth, and a moneyed class was rising into great prominence in the city and county. Dealers in wool, dealers in wheat or in wine, speculators in the minerals of North Wales had little of the dignity attaching to the abbot, but some of them wielded a powerful influence in the trade of the period. Conspicuous among these wealthy citizens stands Richard the Engineer, a supervisor of royal works in North Wales and Cheshire, and lessee of the proverbially lucrative Dee mills. Before the Welsh wars began, Richard had paid £140 a year for the mills (1275), a clause in his agreement indemnifying him against liability for loss resulting from any Welsh attack on the mills.[3] After the war, he secured a grant of the mills and fishery (of Dee bridge) at a rent of £200 a year,[4] and he continued paying this high figure—twice the farm of the city—for twenty years. Another wealthy citizen was Bartholomew of Northenden, who paid no less than £243 6s. 8d.—the highest price paid in the fourteenth century—for the farm of the Dee mills and fishery in 1347.[5]

Still another and more famous citizen was William of Doncaster, a merchant, shipowner and army contractor of very varied activities. In 1295 his agents were buying wine in Gascony for sale in Chester and Anglesey.[6] From 1304 he was importing large quantities into Chester and at times supplying the king.[7] In the early years of the fourteenth

[1] "Lichfield" MS. The matter quoted here is taken from the manuscript Register of the Bishops of Lichfield, Vol. III, fol. 36a and fol. 98. The registers are preserved at the Diocesan Registry, Lichfield.

[2] See Chapter II, 13, 22.

[3] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 105.

[4] *C.F.R.* (1272-1307), 153, 206; *Chamber. Accts.*, I, 14.

[5] *Ibid.*, 119.

[6] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 105.

[7] *Chamber. Accts.*, 45, 91, 93; *Cal. Fine Rolls* (1272-1307), 82; *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 46.

century he was also engaged in the wool trade, exporting sacks from Chester,[1] and sending wool across country to Ipswich and thence to Flanders.[2] At the same time he was dealing in Ireland, apparently in corn.[3] He was also interested in the mineral deposits of North Wales, farming the lead mines of Englefield,[4] and supplying lead for the roofing of Chester Castle.[5] In 1307 he was engaged in a big deal in horse shoes and nails with the king.[6] In 1308 he was collector of the custom of two shillings a tun on imported wine in the ports of Chester, Denwall, Conway, Beaumaris and Carnarvon,[7] and although he had been convicted of introducing bad money in 1300,[8] he was made " searcher of money " in the same ports in 1311.[9]

The wealth acquired in these varied activities raised him to eminence. He purchased or leased land in Rhuddlan, in Overton, in Mostyn,[10] and he was mayor of Chester three times.[11] Trading by land and by sea, interested in the newly settled Wales rather than in England, Doncaster stands out a vivid illustration of the city's activities during the period of its greatest prosperity.

This prosperity rested in a large measure on the activities of the port. Many English seaports at this period were flourishing as a result of the expansion of trade with the continent and especially with Flanders. For this trade the position of Chester was disadvantageous. It faced away from Europe. Its hinterland was poor. The county produced comparatively little wool, and Edward III prohibited its export from Chester.[12] The port had no connection with the Hanseatic league, and it saw very little of the activities of the Italian merchants. Nevertheless, the port was not idle, for it enjoyed a considerable share of the trade and traffic of the Irish Sea. It will be convenient, therefore, to consider the general condition of shipping in this sea before we treat the port of Chester in detail.

The Irish Sea during the period under consideration bore much less traffic than the North Sea or the English Channel, but it is not without interest, for the movements of its shipping reflect in a large measure certain dominant phases both of English commerce and of English efforts towards political expansion. In the first place, there was the east-west traffic between Irish ports and the western ports of England

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 18.
[2] *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 141 ; *Recog. Rolls*, 150, 355.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 126 ; *ibid.* (1301-1307), 143.
[4] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 9, 27, 42, 57, 64, 70.
[5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 79. [6] *Recog. Rolls*, 150.
[7] *Cal. Fine Rolls* (1307-1319), 33, 67, 467, 476.
[8] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 526. [9] *Cal. Fine Rolls* (1307-1319), 79-80.
[10] *Recog. Rolls*, 109, 151 ; *C.F.R.* (1307-1319), 70. He made other purchases, e.g., in Foregate St., Chester (*Ancient Deeds*, VI, 330), and he leased lands in Balderton, Pulford and Dodleston ; Ormerod, II, 866.
[11] Morris, *Chester*, 577. [12] *C.Cl.R.* (1343-1346), 78.

and Wales. This traffic, though comparatively small in peace time, was repeatedly augmented by political or military circumstances. The importation of Irish corn at Chester during the Welsh wars has already been mentioned.[1] A further and larger illustration may be drawn from the years 1296-1298 when the king's memories of the Welsh rising of 1294-1295 must still have been vivid, and his interests were deeply engaged both in Gascony and in Scotland. For the maintenance of the great castles of North Wales, wheat and oats were shipped from Dublin, Drogheda, Ross, Lusk and Heswall, the vessels used including the "St. Mary" of Haverford, the "Sauneye" of Dublin, the "Mariot" of Chester, the "Catherine" of Hereford, the "Mariot" of Dundalk and the "Michael" of Heswall.[2] For his expedition to Scotland, Edward ordered the transport from Ireland to Skinburness (for Carlisle) of 10,000 quarters of oats, 8000 quarters of wheat, 500 carcases of salt beef, 1000 fat pigs and other goods.[3] A still further illustration of military policy rendering busy the quiet waters will be dealt with later.[4]

In the second place, there was the trade with Gascony.[5] Probably every port in the Irish Sea engaged in some measure in the wine trade and some may have imported salt also from Guienne.[6] In return, corn was sent to Gascony, and in the critical years mentioned above (1296-1298), quantities of wheat were shipped from Ireland in the "Holy Cross" of Waterford, the "Holy Cross" of Cork, the "Nicholas" of Lynn, the "Ave Maria" of Drogheda and the "Gaudyer" of Dublin.[7]

Thirdly, there was the miscellaneous coasting traffic and this too, like the other classes, was increased by war. In 1281-1282, for example, the "Mary" of Lynn was plying along the North Wales coast, and Edward was conveying men between Anglesey and Rhuddlan.[8]

The size of the vessels engaged for these various purposes may, to some extent, be conjectured from the cargoes they carried. They were not the largest ships of the period.[9] Those carrying corn from Ireland brought about 220 quarters and one carried 400 quarters.[10] We shall

[1] *Vide supra*, 79-83.

[2] *Cal. of Documents Relating to Ireland* (1293-1301), 159, 272, 273. The "Mariot" of Chester belonged to William of Doncaster of Chester.

[3] *Ibid.* (1293-1301), 271.

[4] *Vide infra*, 136.

[5] Concerning the wine trade see Unwin, *Finance and Trade*, esp. 267, 280-300.

[6] I have not been able to trace the importation of salt into Ireland or North Wales. If such importation can be traced, it is of importance in connection with the Cheshire salt industry, *vide supra*, 121.

[7] *Cal. Documents Relating to Ireland* (1293-1301), 217-218.

[8] *Archæologia*, XVI (1812), 55.

[9] Many ships may be traced in the indexes of the *Calendars of Close Rolls and Patent Rolls*, e.g., *Patent* (1334-1338) and *Patent* (1340-1343) and *Close* (1323-1327). See also Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century*, 41-45; Hunt, *Bristol*, 74.

[10] *Cal. Documents Relating to Ireland* (1293-1301), 159, 217-218.

see ships in the Gascony trade bringing cargoes of from 70 to 100 tuns of wine to the Dee.[1] Respecting their tonnage, letters patent of 1363 ordered the arrest of all ships of 20 tons burden and upwards in certain western ports,[2] and similar letters in the following year refer to "all ships of from 30 to 80 tons burden."[3] That there were smaller vessels sailing the Irish Sea is certain, and an order of 1394 ordered the seizure of all vessels of 10 tons and upwards in the ports between Holyhead and Furness.[4]

These small boats ran great risks. In addition to the perils of tempests which drove the master mariners to seek some sheltering haven,[5] the Irish Sea presented several dangers. The shallow waters around Anglesey were difficult for navigation. Higden even mentions a whirlpool in the Menai Strait.[6] Moreover, prior to the Edwardian settlement of Wales, wrecking had been a custom of the Welsh, and the English efforts to suppress it raised bitter complaints.[7] Further, piracy was common.[8] The Irish Sea was less infested with robbers than the North Sea and English Channel, but the typical English sailor, as pictured by Chaucer, was unscrupulous enough when occasion served, and indeed there were at least two incidents in which Chester men were indicted for plundering at sea. One is the case of Robert de Bradburn, master of the "Nicholas" of Chester, who, with other masters and sailors, boarded a vessel off the Lizard and carried off a valuable cargo.[9]

The other occurred in the Western Hebrides where a band of Chester men seized twenty tuns of wine belonging to the King of Scotland at a time when England and Scotland were at peace.[10]

Apart from piracy, unexpected hostility might be met. In 1322, eight Chester merchants (among whom was the famous William of Doncaster) chartered a ship, "La Nicholas" of Lymington, to carry wine from Bordeaux to Chester. With a cargo of 105 tuns and 7 pipes, the vessel touched at "Le Stanhous" in Anglesey. Here it was inspected by the chamberlain of North Wales, and for some reason that is not explained, the chamberlain's men attacked the sailors. In a panic they put out to sea, but were driven back by a tempest, whereupon the chamberlain and his men renewed the attack, raised the hue and cry, killed two of the crew, and injured five others so that they died of their wounds. Again the boat put out to sea, and this time it

[1] *Vide infra*, 137.
[2] *C.P.R.* (1361-1364), 415.
[3] *Ibid.* (1364-1367), 12.
[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 38.
[5] *Ibid.*, 105. See also below (the incident in Anglesey).
[6] *Polychronicon*, II, 41.
[7] *Registrum Epistolarum J. Peckham*, II, xlvii; II, 443; II, 453.
[8] Concerning piracy, see *Finance and Trade*, 292, and for the same in the following century see Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century*, 84-85, and Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 84-86.
[9] *C.P.R.* (1348-1350), 593, 594.
[10] *C.Cl.R.* (1381-1385), 355.

was driven by the storm into "parts unknown." Part of the cargo was lost and the remainder had suffered deterioration before the vessel finally reached safety.[1] Such an episode may have been rare. That it could occur at all is a reminder of the risks run by merchants and mariners in the Irish Sea. A final illustration may be seen in a request by the earl of Pembroke for a certain writ. "As there is danger in the passage to Ireland," the petition runs, "he prays that the king's writ may be issued in duplicate so that one attorney may cross over from Chester and the other from Pembroke." [2]

We have now noticed very briefly the broader aspects of trade and traffic in the Irish Sea, and may proceed to consider the port of Chester. That its importance at this period was secondary to that of Bristol may be conceded.[3] That it never attained the importance of many of the ports on the east or south coasts is, of course, certain. Its remoteness from the busy commercial life of the North Sea and English Channel made its growth more distinctively English, for neither Hansard nor Lombard had any direct connection with the port. On the other hand, this very remoteness limited its development. The customs system of the fourteenth century directed the movement of English exports into definite channels, and since the exports were mainly destined for continental markets, it was natural that Chester should be omitted from the list of ports where staple commodities were concentrated. In 1302 the chamberlain of Chester accounted for £19 1s. 8½d. as custom on the export of "27 lasts, 4 dickers, 2 hides, 1 sack of wool and 563 lambs' fleeces." [4] This was a comparatively small quantity, but from 1303 onwards, the typical English products—wools, wool fells and hides—were not exported from Chester at all. The chamberlain reported each year that his receipts from the custom of wool and hides were nil "because the liberty of the cocket is not yet obtained from the Lord the King in this county." [5] And although as the century advanced, various changes were made in the list of staple towns, Chester did not gain the privilege of exporting these goods.

It is, however, possible that small quantities of wool were smuggled out of the port. The fact that there was no cocket seal at Chester must have led some merchants to seek to escape the payment of custom by shipping their wool there. Letters close of 1343 state that "several merchants have bought wool in divers counties of England . . . and they take such wool to Wales, Cornwall and Chester to load there without paying the custom and subsidy to the king." [6] A letter patent

[1] *C.Cl.R.* (1318-1323), 453.
[2] *Cal. Documents Relating to Ireland* (1252-1284), 464.
[3] Concerning the trade of mediæval Bristol, see J. F. Nicholls, "The Early Bristol Charters," in *R.H.S. Trans.*, I, N.S. (1875), 89-95; Hunt, *Bristol*, 39-84.
[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 18. [5] *Ibid.*, 91, 102, 160, 224, 263.
[6] *C.Cl.R.* (1343-1346), 78.

of the same date brings to light a specific instance. Two burgesses were said to have hidden 200 sacks of wool in the town of Hereford, "which wool the said James and Peter are trying to carry to Wales or Chester and thence take clandestinely to foreign parts without paying the custom and subsidy due."[1] What degree of success attended such efforts at smuggling cannot be determined, but the exclusion of Chester from the list of staple ports must have hindered the prosperity of the port.

Deprived of its share in the export of wool, the port's activities must be explained by reference to Ireland and to Gascony. The nature and extent of the Irish trade has not yet been fully investigated. The marten skins mentioned in Domesday are well known,[2] but few modern writers have anything definite to say about the Dublin-Chester trade in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Mrs. Green, one of the more specific on this subject, refers to the export from Ireland to Chester of cloth—"friezes and serges, cloth white and red, russet and green."[3] Other writers refer to merchants travelling to and from Ireland, but do not mention any commodities. Nor are mediæval writers very precise. William of Malmesbury stated that "necessaries are exchanged between Chester and Ireland, so that deficiency in any one article due to the character of the soil, is made good by the labour of the merchant."[4] The three Chester monastic writers are almost equally vague. Lucian and Higden mention merely fish and merchandise, and Bradshaw apparently only quoted his predecessors.[5] The writer of the *Libel of English Policy* goes into details of Irish products in the fifteenth century —hides, skins, fish, woollen and linen cloth[6]—but does not state specifically that any of them were imported at Chester.[7]

A study of sources on the English side tends to show that the most important commodity received from Ireland was not fish, nor cloth, but corn. Whenever famine or extraordinary consumption caused a dearth of corn in Cheshire or North Wales, merchants and monks alike turned to Ireland for supplies. The large quantities of wheat and oats brought into the port of Chester and the Dee estuary during the Welsh wars have already been mentioned.[8] The importation of Irish corn had been encouraged by a charter of Walter de Lasci (1202-1231), granting the citizens of Chester licence to trade in corn and grain and

[1] *C.P.R.* (1343-1345), 164. [2] Round, *Feudal England*, 465.
[3] *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing*, 52.
[4] Quoted in *Liber Luciani*, 21. [5] *Ibid.*, 23.
[6] Wright, *Political Songs* (Rolls Series), II, 157.
[7] A writer of high imaginative power who quotes no sources states: "The wharves are littered with quintals of raisins, with bales of hides and furs, sheep fells, yarns and rugs and blankets, with lasts of eels and salted salmon, most of these from Ireland in ships which will leave Chester again loaded with grain, cheeses, salt from the Wiches, bow staves and manufactured articles." Duckworth, *Chester*, 125. [8] *Vide supra*, 79-83.

flour at Drogheda and all other ports in his lands in Ireland, and withdrawing the toll of 2d. a crannock which he had previously exacted.[1]

The importation continued during the five years' peace between the two Welsh wars,[2] and was a prominent feature in the life of the port during the reign of Edward II, while an inquisition of 1309 showed that Irish merchants had also taken ships laden with corn to the little river port of Frodsham.[3] Thus in 1316 John Demestre of Chester obtained a safe conduct for a year for the purpose of importing Irish corn,[4] and in the same year a number of Chester merchants went to Ireland on the earl's behalf to buy up to 200 quarters of wheat.[5] In 1321 two merchants, William of Basingwerk and Madoc of Capenhurst, sought protection for their agents who were sent to purchase 200 quarters of corn,[6] and in 1322 the earl himself sent servants to buy "corn and other dead stock" in Ireland and North Wales.[7] The difficulties under which buyers of corn laboured are illustrated by the lot of a Chester merchant who, having obtained a quantity of wheat, had to give up thirty crannocks to the king's purveyors to be sent to Scotland.[8]

During the reign of Edward III the Irish corn trade appears to be of much less importance, but at the end of the fourteenth century a period of scarcity again necessitated importation, and in 1400 orders were sent to Ireland for 100 quarters of wheat, 60 quarters of oats and 30 quarters of peas, for consumption in Cheshire and the castles of North Wales.[9]

It is a more difficult task to discover what mediæval Chester exported to Ireland. Chester merchants settled in Dublin at an early date, and in the middle of the thirteenth century the names of several of them are found on the rolls of the Dublin gild merchant, and the roll of the free citizens of Dublin.[10] During the reigns of the three Edwards, the greater Chester merchants such as William of Doncaster had their agents in Ireland,[11] and merchants from Dublin and Drogheda

[1] Morris, *Chester*, 11, 458.
[2] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 265.
[3] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. II, No. 53.
[4] *C.P.R.* (1313-1317), 470.
[5] *C.Cl.R.* (1313-1318), 299.
[6] *C.P.R.* (1321-1324), 27.
[7] *Ibid.*, 229.
[8] *C.Cl.R.* (1323-1327), 41.
[9] *Recog. Rolls*, 445. I have not found any statement of freights for goods carried between Ireland and Chester. Some approach to the subject may, however, be gained from the freights between Dublin and Carnarvon or Conway, and between Drogheda and Carnarvon or Conway, quoted in *Cal. Documents Relating to Ireland* (1293-1301), 159.
[10] *Historical and Municipal Documents of Ireland*, 1172-1320. *Gild Merchants*: Johannes de Cestria, Laurencius Sumor de Cestria (pp. 83, 86); *Free Citizens* (1225-1250): Hugo de Cestria, Willelmus de Cestria, Randulphus de Cestria, Ricardus filius Johannis spiciarii de Cestria (113, 115, 121, 122); *Gild Merchants* (1256-1257): Adam le Koppere de Cestria, Johannes le Honte de Cestria, Ricardus de Wichio de Cestria, Phillip de Cestria, sutor, Herbertus frater Agnetis vinetarie de Cestria, Willelmus cyrothecarius de Cestria (137, 138, 139).
[11] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 126; *ibid.* (1301-1307), 143; *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 6.

came to Chester.[1] Miscellaneous entries record the movement of live bucks and does from the Cheshire forest to a royal park in Ireland,[2] or the transfer of some oxen and sheep,[3] but for the most part the goods exported, like the goods imported, are described generally as "merchandise."[4] Higden says quite briefly that Ireland loves to get England's minerals and salt.[5] On the whole, it is probable that Chester received a greater quantity of goods from Ireland than she sent back.

Apart altogether from trade, however, the increasing interest in Irish affairs displayed by the English crown was leading to an increased traffic between Chester and Dublin which was advantageous to the shipowners.

From the early years of the reign of Edward III, ships were frequently assembled in the Dee for the conveyance of officials and their retinues, and not infrequently for the transport of men-at-arms and even horses. For example, in 1331 the chancellor of Ireland sailed from Chester.[6] In 1332 boats were collected at Whitehaven, Holyhead, Tenby and Chester for the transport of troops and victuals to Ireland.[7] In 1337 six ships were ordered for the conveyance of a new chancellor and various ministers.[8] There were similar orders in 1341 and 1356,[9] and the operations of Lionel, duke of Clarence, from 1361 onwards caused a large demand for shipping in the ports of Chester and Liverpool. Ships were impressed both in Ireland and England, and some hundreds of troops and reinforcements with horses and harness were despatched.[10] Minor operations in the later years of the reign[11] and in the reign of Richard II kept the port busy with Irish traffic down to the end of the fourteenth century.[12]

Next in importance to trade and traffic with Ireland came the trade with Bordeaux. Before the end of the thirteenth century, large quantities of wine were being imported into England from Gascony. Since both producers and consumers were subjects of the crown, the trade enjoyed royal approval. As its dimensions grew, regulations were drawn up which were designed to facilitate the trade, protect the merchant, and prevent excessive charges both in respect of middlemen and in cost of transport. Cargoes of wine were brought into the port of Chester throughout the period under consideration, the volume of business increasing as the fourteenth century advanced. The port

[1] Morris, *Chester*, 471.
[2] *Cal. of Documents Relating to Ireland* (1171-1251), 398.
[3] Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, 30.
[4] E.g., *C.P.R.* (1361-1364), 347.
[5] *Polychronicon*, II, 18.
[6] *C.Cl.R.* (1330-1333), 214.
[7] *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 323.
[8] *C.Cl.R.* (1337-1339), 161.
[9] *Ibid.* (1341-1343), 56; *C.P.R.* (1354-1358), 429.
[10] *C.Cl.R.* (1360-1364), 187, 304; *C.P.R.* (1361-1364), 17, 19, 21, 36, 415; *ibid.* (1364-1367), 12, 29.
[11] *Ibid.* (1374-1377), 336, 396.
[12] *Ibid.* (1377-1381), 447; Morris, *Chester*, 31, 32, 458.

became a depôt from which wine was distributed not only to the palatine county, but to Lancashire and North Wales.

The ships used in this trade were almost exclusively English or Irish, but a large proportion of them belonged to ports other than Chester.[1] They usually reached Chester in October, November or early December. Some sailed direct from Bordeaux without touching at any port on the way. Others put in at Milford or Cork or Dublin. The former, of course, paid prisage at Chester; the latter paid at the first port at which they touched, and obtained a certificate of payment to present to the earl's officials at Chester.[2] This system of forwarding a certificate or letters acknowledging the receipt of prise probably worked fairly well, but it was not without difficulties. Occasionally, a merchant complained that payment was exacted twice,[3] and not infrequently when the forwarding of his certificate was delayed, he had to enter into a recognisance for certain sums in the event of the certificate not arriving or proving unsatisfactory to the officials in charge.[4]

In some instances the size of the cargo or the cost of freight is stated. Thus in March, 1303-1304, a ship of William of Doncaster brought into the port 70 tuns of wine, 50 of which belonged to the earl of Lincoln and 20 to various merchants.[5] In 1322 the "Nicholas" of Lymington sailed for Chester with no less than 105 tuns and 7 pipes.[6] In 1402 the "Michael" of Dublin carried 67 tuns.[7] The rates charged by a Chester shipowner for carriage in the "Trinity" of Ottermouth in 1395 were as follows :— [8]

Bordeaux to Waterford	. . .	14s. per tun.
,, ,, Dublin	. . .	15s. ,, ,,
,, ,, Beaumaris	. . .	18s. ,, ,,
,, ,, Chester	. . .	18s. ,, ,,

In the same year the "Leonard" of Portsmouth was chartered to carry 78 casks from Bordeaux to Beaumaris or Chester at 18s. per tun.[9] The rates varied from time to time, dropping as low as 12s. or even 10s. per tun and rising to 20s. per tun.[10]

[1] E.g., Dartmouth, Dublin, Bristol, Plymouth (*Recog. Rolls*, 7, 27, 105, 249, 529). It was not uncommon for merchants of one port to employ ships of another port. (Cf. Gras, *Early English Customs System*, 115, 120.) A good example is Innocent de Chesterfield, a Chester merchant, who shipped wine from Rochelle in the "Mary" of Bristol (1393), from Bordeaux in the "Christopher" of Newcastle (1393-1394), and in the "Maudelane" of Tenby (1395-1396); *Recog. Rolls*, 105. Compare also the transport of corn from Ireland to Lancaster in the "Trinity" of Chester (*Historical and Municipal Documents of Ireland*, 391), and the examples quoted above, pp. 131-132. See also *Finance and Trade*, 291.

[2] *Recog. Rolls*, 7, 34, 38, 62.

[3] *C.Cl.R.* (1364-1368), 226-227.

[4] *Recog. Rolls*, 529. On this subject see Unwin, *Finance and Trade*, 290.

[5] *Chamber. Accts.*, 45.

[6] *C.Cl.R.* (1318-1323), 453.

[7] *Recog. Rolls*, 529.

[8] Simon, *History of the Wine Trade*, I, 256.

[9] *Ibid.*, I, 256.

[10] *Ibid.*, I, 256.

That some of the wine which came to Chester was of high quality is clear. While in Gascony, prior to his coronation, Edward I sent some wines to Chester.[1] During his Welsh campaigns further quantities were bought for him and sent to Chester.[2] But a safer indication of quality lies in the time of importation and the value per tun. Many of the wine ships reached Chester in the autumn, immediately after the vintage. The liquor they carried was inferior to the "wines of rack" which were shipped in the spring. When, therefore, Edward I learned that a vessel had reached Chester containing "good, choice and clear wines of rack," he ordered his justice to secure 40 casks if they really were good, choice and clear, and to keep them safely in the royal cellars till otherwise ordered.[3] This higher quality of wine is referred to again in 1320 when the "Holirodecogge" reached Chester "in July, in the Reck-time." The two tuns of wine of prisage taken from this ship at the standard rate of 20s. per tun, were afterwards sold back to the shipowner at 80s. a tun [4]—a high price for the period.[5]

The importation of wine was, therefore, a very prominent feature in the trade of Chester in the fourteenth century. Bordeaux was the most distant port to which the Chester sailors voyaged, and Chester was, as a rule, the most northern point on the west coast to which wine ships came.[6] The activities of the port in normal times were almost confined to trade with Ireland and Gascony, and since some of the wine ships belonged to Dublin, and others touched sometimes at Irish ports, the two chief branches of Chester's maritime trade cannot be wholly separated.

The remaining trade was mainly with the towns of North Wales—with Rhuddlan, Carnarvon, Conway and Beaumaris. Millstones and corn were brought from Anglesey,[7] slates from Ogwen,[8] lead from the

[1] *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 79. He also had some wine brought by land to Chester. *Ibid.* (1272-1281), 228. [2] *Ibid.*, 212.

[3] Simon, *op. cit.*, I, 268. The entry is taken from the "Close Rolls," but the *Calendar* (1272-1279), 274, omits the words "of rack."

[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 91, 93. The "wine of prisage" was sometimes sold by the chamberlain, the price being entered in his receipts. If the price obtained was low, he added an explanatory note such as "because it was beyond measure weak" or "because it became so bad that it could not be sold higher." *Ibid.*, 91, 208.

[5] Examples of prices of the wine of prisage sold by the chamberlain :—

1302-3	50s.	per tun.		*Chamber. Accts.*		39
1305-6	50s.	,,		,,	,,	77
1315-16	70s.	,,		,,	,,	85
1320	64s. 8d.	,,		,,	,,	91
1334-36	72s.	,,	(average)	,,	,,	109

[6] After the middle of the fourteenth century, some went to Liverpool, *C.Cl.R.* (1364-1368), 226-227.

[7] *Chamber. Accts.*, 126, 167, 241 ; *Archæologia*, XVI, 72.

[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241.

Isle of Man.[1] While Edward I was at Rhuddlan, venison was sent to him from Chester by water.[2]

Finally, military operations in Scotland in the fourteenth century brought activity to the port. The conveyance of men-at-arms and horses for operations in Ireland has already been noted. During the Scotch wars, Chester furnished ships for the transport of provisions. Large quantities of corn, wine, bacon, salt and horse shoes were sent to Skinburness in Cumberland in 1308 and 1310.[3] Two ships fully armed and provisioned were requisitioned in 1311,[4] and further quantities of provisions were sent to Carlisle in 1318 [5] and to Skinburness in 1333.[6]

The total volume of business arising from the various branches of Chester's maritime trade must have been less than that enjoyed by several ports on the east and south coasts. In the absence of the "Customs Entry Books" [7] for the fourteenth century, it is impossible to make any accurate comparison or even to illustrate in detail the customs levied in the port of Chester. They present a certain complexity, for it is necessary to distinguish three authorities collecting different duties in different areas. In the first place, the king (after 1303) levied a duty of two shillings a tun on imported wines. The second duty was levied by the earl of Chester who took his prise of two tuns from each cargo of wine entering the port. Lastly, there were certain dues claimed by the citizens of Chester.

The official appointed to collect the two shillings per tun on imported wine was responsible for this duty not only at Chester, but in all the ports of North Wales. This grouping of a series of ports was merely an administrative device for the collection of revenue. The whole coast-line of England and Wales had been "divided into sections in each of which was a chief port and member ports." [8] In this instance, however, it would be erroneous to suppose that there was any subordination of the Welsh ports to Chester or any definition of the extent of the port of Chester. Indeed, the stretch of coast-line in which the official operated varied from time to time. Sometimes it was "Chester, Denwall, Conway, Beaumaris and Carnarvon"; sometimes "Chester and all ports in North Wales"; sometimes "Chester and the adjacent ports," while at times it included South Wales and even Ireland.[9]

In a more limited area the chamberlain was responsible for the earl's prisage. There appears to be no explicit definition of the extent

[1] *C.P.R.* (1281-1292), 341, 358.
[2] *Archæologia*, XVI, 55, 68.
[3] *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 81; *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 213.
[4] *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 353.
[5] *Ibid.* (1317-1321), 198, 215.
[6] *C.Cl.R.* (1333-1337), 25, 26.
[7] "The Customs Entry Books" (Chester MS.) begin in 1451-1452.
[8] Gras, *Early English Customs System*, 105.
[9] *C.F.R.* (1307-1319), 9, 10, 33, 67; *C.P.R.* (1327-1330), 107, 128; *ibid.* (1330-1334), 103, 434; *C.Cl.R.* (1381-1385), 289.

of the port of Chester, but there are grounds for believing that in the fourteenth century the port was conceived to extend the length of the estuary, thus including the lesser ports in Wirral. The citizens had certain admiralty powers between Chester and Arnold's Eye, a point at the limit of the estuary.[1] Freights from Bordeaux to Chester were quoted to the Redbank, a point far down the estuary.[2] Many of the ships from which prise was taken were said to be "in the port at the Redbank."[3] A similar ship was said to be "in the port at Burton,"[4] and in one instance, the wine of prisage from "a ship called the 'Naudeu' of Dartmouth discharged in the port of Chester," was taken at Heswall.[5]

In a still more limited area the citizens had their dues. In answer to a *quo warranto* of the later part of the fourteenth century, the mayor and citizens claimed the right to levy certain duties on any ship "entering the aforesaid liberty laden with wine, herrings, fish, salmon, grain or any other merchandise or food."[6]

Now the liberty of Chester extended down the river to Poolbridge near Saltney.[7] It is evident, therefore, that any deterioration of the river channel which prevented ships from sailing up the river, at least as far as Poolbridge, would not only hinder the trade of the city but also lessen its tolls.

We have already referred to the use of Burton, Heswall and the Redbank as illustrating the extent of the port of Chester. This use of the estuary ports had a deeper significance: access to the city itself by water was becoming more and more difficult. Many of the vessels were discharging their cargoes of wine, six, eight or even twelve miles down the stream without coming up to Chester. The wine of prisage taken at the estuary ports was brought up to Chester by smaller boats.[8] Probably the bulk of the cargo was brought up in the same way.[9] Nor is the wine exceptional; other heavy cargoes were discharged at a distance down the stream or transferred to smaller boats. Slates for Chester castle, for example, were brought by sea from Ogwen, unloaded at Shotwick, and carted to Chester[10] (1357-1358). Millstones for the Dee mills were brought from Anglesey by water to Burton[11] (1357-1358), and in 1373, when transport was needed for an Irish expedition, orders were issued for the ships to be assembled at Burton.[12] It would prob-

[1] Morris (*Doc.*), 498, 529 *n.*
[2] Simon, *History of the Wine Trade*, 256.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 238, 240, 255, 271, 275.
[4] *Ibid.*, 229.
[5] *Ibid.*, 26.
[6] Morris (*Doc.*), 553; Morris merely prints the claims without comment, explanation or examples.
[7] *Ibid.*, 497.
[8] *Chamber. Accts.*, 26, 93, 123, 214.
[9] I have not been able to trace the transfer of the cargoes to Chester. Some of the wine may have been distributed from the estuary ports.
[10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 241.
[11] *Ibid.*, 241.
[12] *C.Cl.R.* (1369-1374), 520.

ably be erroneous to infer that in the late fourteenth century no sea-going vessels came up to Chester. There were probably seasonal high tides on which vessels might still reach the city, but it is clear that at that date, Chester's decline had already begun.

The cause of this decline—the silting of the Dee estuary—is well known, but the process has not yet received detailed historical treatment.[1] The process presents no novelty, but only the gradual choking of a channel which for many years must have presented difficulties for navigation. In the course of centuries the river's channel has changed in position, in depth and in width. At the time of the Roman occupation, the river flowed near the position of the Watergate.[2] At the end of the twelfth century, the Roodee was covered daily by the tide,[3] and even in the early fourteenth century, the river flowed so near the city walls that vessels were moored to rings in the walls of the Water Tower.[4] By the middle of the fifteenth century, the condition of the channel was such that sea-going vessels could not approach within twelve miles of the city.[5]

The silting which had thus ruined the port was due primarily to the normal deposition of sediment in the estuary, a process accentuated by the tidal current which checked the river current. A secondary cause lay in the fact that erosion was taking place both on the shores of the estuary and on the sea front. For example, at Gronant in Flintshire, certain lands were leased by the Dean and Chapter of St. Asaph from the Black Prince, a clause in the indenture stipulating that an allowance of 12d. a year should be made for every acre which might be wasted by the sea. That the danger referred to was real, may be inferred from the fact that several commissions were appointed to assess the damage suffered from time to time by the lands at this spot.[6] Tidal currents, therefore, brought sand into the estuary, and ebbing more slowly than they flowed, left deposits which gradually accumulated. Moreover, the work of nature was accelerated by the work of man, for the great causeway at Chester robbed the river of the swirl which might have carried the sediment further out.[7]

The forces at work were fairly well understood by the citizens—at any rate in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries. Letters patent of 1445, quoting a petition from the mayor and citizens, stated that "for

[1] The best geological account is to be found in Ashton, *Evolution of a Coastline* (London, 1920), 161-169.

[2] Ashton, *op. cit.*, 163.

[3] *Liber Luciani*, 46.

[4] Ashton, *op. cit.*, 163.

[5] Morris (*Doc.*), 511.

[6] *Recog. Rolls*, 9, 206; *C.Cl.R.* (1381-1385), 469.

[7] Mr. R. Stewart-Brown suggests a further cause of silting: "It is quite probable, though it does not seem to have been generally noted, that to the excessive use of fish weirs, 'coups,' fishyards or floodyards, as they were called, may be ascribed much of the silting up of the Dee" (*Manor of Shotwick*, 18).

forty years now the great flow of water at the said port . . . is taken away from the said harbour by the wreck of sea sand so that the said harbour is wholly destroyed . . . no merchant ship can approach within twelve miles and more of the said city."[1] Similar letters in 1484 attribute the choking to " the wreck of sea sands daily falling and increasing in the channel,"[2] and a letter of 1486 refers to " the vehement inflow of the sea . . . the vehement influx of sand and silting up of gravel."[3] In recognition of the declining prosperity of the city, the king reduced the fee farm from £100 to £50, then to £30, and finally to £20.

The same letters, however, state that at the time the fee farm of the city was fixed at £100 (namely, 1300[4]), " and long after, there was a good harbour to the said city." It is evident, therefore, that whatever the exact position of this " harbour "[5] may have been, the fourteenth century represents the latest period when the navigation of the Dee was practicable for sea-going ships. It is probable that the climatic stress of this century accelerated the silting ;[6] it is possible that changes in the channel rendered navigation more difficult ; it is possible that in the next century vessels of deeper draught were sailing the Irish Sea.[7] It is certain that after the close of the fourteenth century, Chester's importance as a seaport was negligible.

The position of Chester, as we have already noted, had almost all the natural advantages which made for the rise of a mediæval town, and during the centuries of its eminence, it suffered little material loss. Border towns like Carlisle and Berwick might fall into the hands of enemies, but the Welsh never captured Chester. Border seaports like Winchelsea and Rye might suffer burning at the hands of foes,[8] but Chester remained undamaged. Nevertheless, further growth was unlikely, for natural advantages are relative to the condition of human beings, and some advantages are not permanent. The advantages which accrued from the Dee as a highway of commerce steadily diminished.[9] The military and political importance of the town was rapidly vanishing. It would remain a market for a large area, but that area

[1] Morris (*Doc.*), 511.
[2] *Ibid.* (*Doc.*), 576.
[3] *Ibid.* (*Doc.*), 521.
[4] *Ibid.* (*Doc.*), 490.
[5] The words are " bonus portus " in both the letters of 1445 and 1484. Morris translates the first " a good harbour," the second " a good port."
[6] On the subject of climatic stress, see Ellsworth Huntington, *World Power and Evolution* (Yale University Press, 1919).
[7] See Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century*, 44. Hunt says the ships of Bristol were nearly all of less than 200 tons burden, but quotes the "Gracedieu" 200 tons, and the "Gabriel" 215 tons. *Bristol*, 74.
[8] See Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 87, 88.
[9] There is a great deal of evidence of efforts to reopen the Dee waterway for trading purposes. For early evidence see " Harl." MSS. 2084 and 2003.

was comparatively poor and unpopulous. No great woollen industry had been established; no great increase in wool production was likely. In short, at the close of our period it had already reached and passed the zenith of its mediæval greatness.[1]

[1] In contrast with Chester, Bristol became one of the staple towns (Harvey, *Bristol*, 39; Hunt, *Bristol*, 77). In the middle of the thirteenth century it was engaged on a great scheme of harbour improvement (Harvey, *op. cit.*, 31; Hunt *op. cit.*, 39-40), and at the close of our period, it was "created a county with an elective sheriff and shire jurisdiction" (Hunt, *op. cit.*, 84).

CHAPTER IX.

THE POPULATION.

In comparison with England as a whole, mediæval Cheshire was thinly populated. The conditions prevailing in the march-land, and the great extent of the afforested areas had hindered economic development and the cultivated area was insufficient for the support of a large population.

Domesday reveals a sparsely peopled region with small settlements chiefly along the banks of the rivers.[1] "The most highly cultivated parts lay in Wirral and along the Dee and its eastern tributaries. The area of cultivation steadily decreased northwards to the uplands of Delamere and North Cheshire and eastward to the Cheshire Highlands."[2] The normal assessment of the county and city was probably 550 hides, and the land available for cultivation amounted to just over 1000 carucates.[3] The total number of persons indicated in Domesday has been estimated at 1951,[4] and one writer has estimated the whole population of the city and county in 1086 at about 10,500 to 11,000.[5]

After the Domesday Survey, materials for an estimate of the population are, unfortunately, lacking. The foundation of the palatine earldom led to the growth of a series of historical records such as few

[1] Some light will probably be thrown on the early history of these settlements by the researches of the Place-Name Society. No organised study of Cheshire place-names has yet been made, but it may be noted that "tons" are numerous in the valleys of the Mersey, Weaver and Dee. On the Cheshire side of the Mersey are Halton, Appleton, Stretton, Preston, Hatton, Stockton, Walton, Norton, Partington, Carrington, Urmston, Withington, Heaton (Mersey), Ashton (on Mersey). Another page of past history may be opened by the location of the "leys" which lie almost without exception on the strip of higher land which runs across the county. Here are Kingsley, Alvanley, Norley, Tirley, Burwardsley, Cholmondeley, and many others.

[2] Dr. Tait in *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 17.

[3] Brownbill, *Cheshire in Domesday Book*, 6.

[4] Dr. Tait in *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 71, and Brownbill, *op. cit.* The estimate is Mr. Brownbill's. Dr. Tait makes a reservation in respect of the number of burgesses in Chester, and then continues, "With this exception, our own reckoning does not seriously differ from his."

[5] "Allowing for wives and families, we may perhaps estimate the population of Cheshire in 1086 at about 9000 and add some 1500 or 2000 to this as the number of priests and people in the city of Chester itself" (Brownbill, *op. cit.*, 7).

counties possess, but it led also to the omission of Cheshire from the various assessments which afford a basis for estimates of population in the fourteenth century. No numerical estimate is possible, therefore, for the period under review. Several factors relevant to a consideration of the problem can, however, be distinguished.

In the first place, while famine and disease must have operated with what may be considered normal vigour to check the growth of population in Cheshire, war tended to this end with more than normal vigour. The figures in Domesday from which the initial estimate is derived, are doubtless below the normal for the middle of the eleventh century, for the Conqueror had marched west from his devastations in Yorkshire, to repress a rebellion at Chester, and had wrought devastation in the surrounding country, on a scale second only to that north of the Humber.[1] Moreover, the first earl laid waste parts of his own earldom for the pleasures of hunting,[2] and from his time down to the conquest of Wales by Edward I, war with the Welsh was frequent.

The drain on the manhood of the county caused by this recurrent warfare was, in theory, relieved by exemption from service in other theatres of war.[3] The skill and experience gained in fighting the Welsh were, however, so valuable as to render the men of Cheshire and the march superior as soldiers to the men of other parts. In practice, therefore, their services were requisitioned, and when the campaigns of Edward I had given security to the marchland, large numbers of Cheshire men were marshalled for wars in Scotland and in France. In Cheshire, therefore, more than in most parts of England, war tended to check the growth of population.

In spite of this powerful check, there is abundant evidence of a large increase of population between the date of the Domesday Survey and the middle of the fourteenth century. The fearful harrying of 1070 had temporarily set back all progress. Nearly two hundred manors had been waste and the value of many others had been reduced. By 1086, however, only fifty-three manors—chiefly in the poorer lands of east Cheshire—remained waste,[4] and although the yearly value of the county was £85 less than it had been in 1066, though the average annual value of a Cheshire manor was far less than the average value of Shropshire manors,[5] the tide had turned. The county was recovering.

The process of further recovery and of positive increase may have been very slow. Hardly any of the contemporary circumstances favoured increase of population. Monastic foundations were comparatively few and comparatively late. Except in the wiches, no industry found a home in Cheshire. The lapse of the earldom to the Crown was

[1] See Dr. Tait's introduction to *The Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 7.
[2] Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, IV, 487.
[3] By Earl Randle's charter, *vide supra*, 9.
[4] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 7, 8. [5] *Ibid.*, 8.

in some ways a hindrance to economic progress, for the royal earl did not live in Cheshire. He created no local demand for food or goods. His large revenues were spent elsewhere. Even if it were certain (and it is not) that the administration of the earldom was improved by royal officials, turbulence continued on a sufficient scale to be a menace to trade and even to life.

Only one special factor tended directly to an increase of population. This was the avowry system, by which a man who had committed a transgression of the law, or who needed the protection of a superior lord for any reason, might place himself within the protection of the earl of Chester or of the superior lord of the place where he intended to reside.[1] Such men were not necessarily evil-doers, but since the new-comer would be liable for military service, it is probable that men were accepted without any rigorous regard for moral character, and the losses caused by war may have been counterbalanced by the immigration of fugitives. With this exception, however, it is not to special circumstances, but to the slow working of natural processes that increase of population is to be attributed.

That this increase was great cannot be doubted. If Mr. Brownbill's estimate of the population in 1086 as about 10,500 to 11,000 be correct, the population in the middle of the fourteenth century must have been at least double this figure. The evidence of this increase lies not only in the prosperity of the port of Chester, the growth of the city and of the wiches. It is found also in the increased population of many smaller communities.

In the course of two and a half centuries there had been considerable changes in the density of population. New centres of population had arisen in places which in 1086 had little importance, in some places which were not even mentioned in Domesday. Appleton, for example, was waste in 1086.[2] In 1329 it had sixteen customary tenants.[3] Eaton (by Tarporley) is not mentioned in Domesday Book. (The manor of Rushton to which it belonged, was waste.) Eaton passed into the hands of the Greys and had become a considerable manor by the fourteenth century.[4] Of Frodsham, Domesday stated: "In the demesne are two ploughs and one serf, and there are eight villeins and three bordars with two ploughs."[5] An extent of Frodsham in 1283 revealed no less than one hundred and ten burgages in this manor.[6] Concerning Over, the Domesday entry runs: "Four freemen held it as one manor. There is land (enough) for five ploughs. There is one radman with one

[1] R. Stewart-Brown, "The Avowries of Cheshire," in *E.H.R.*, XXIX, 41.
[2] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 207. [3] "Harl." MS. 2115/109.
[4] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102. *Vide supra*, 33, 51, 61.
[5] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 105.
[6] Beamont, *An Account of the Ancient Town of Frodsham*, 41-42.

plough."[1] The manor of Over was granted by Edward I to Vale Royal abbey and a rental of 1334 shows several score of tenants living on the manor.[2] In Domesday, Shotwick had four villeins and two bordars.[3] An extent of this manor in 1280 showed there were then four free tenants and twenty-five bond tenants.[4] Manorial extents of Barrow,[5] Halton [6] and Tarvin [7] show similar increases in population.

Still further evidence of a statistical nature is to be seen in the number of men raised in the county for war. In spite of the long continued drain caused by earlier wars, levy after levy was raised on a scale far greater than operated in other counties, and in 1282-1283 no less than 2000 Cheshire footmen were with the king's army in North Wales.[8] In 1297 a body of 4000 footmen were arrayed for service in Scotland,[9] and a century later, Richard II had a bodyguard of 2000 Cheshire archers.

Finally an increasing population would necessitate an increasing supply of food, and evidence of efforts to that end appears in the bringing into cultivation of large areas of waste,[10] in the measures for draining the large marshy area on the southern bank of the Mersey,[11] and in the importation of Irish wheat.[12]

There was, moreover, some movement in the areas of highest density of population. Wirral and the Dee basin, the most thickly populated regions in Domesday Book, had advanced relatively much less rapidly than the Weaver basin, where greater security, almost equal fertility and the earl's special interest had led to the growth not only of the three wiches, but also of the very populous manors of Frodsham, Weaverham, Over, Darnhall and Halton.[13] Further east, however, in the less fertile and more elevated regions, the land remained very sparsely peopled. Rudheath and the forest of Macclesfield covered large areas in which there was scarcely any large settlement. Congleton, Macclesfield, Stockport, Knutsford and Altrincham had received charters, but with the exception of the first two, they were of little importance. Taken as a whole, Cheshire was one of the least populous counties in the Kingdom.

[1] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 111. [2] *V.R.L. Book*, 92.
[3] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 97.
[4] Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, 59. [5] Ormerod, II, 340.
[6] "Harl." 2115/83 } Both these extents give the names of tenants, but as
[7] "Harl." 2115/204 } questions arise of joint tenants and of double tenancies by one individual, and as the line which separates the free from the unfree is not clear, it is not possible to quote with certainty the fourteenth-century figures for contrast with the Domesday figures. In the Tarvin extent the number of names is 34. [8] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 190.
[9] *C.P.R.* (1292-1301), 324. The number seems very large. Dr. Morris says that 3000 Cestrians were paid for. *Welsh Wars*, 285.
[10] *Vide supra*, 10-15. [11] *Vide supra*, 19-20. [12] *Vide supra*, 134-5.
[13] Halton (Manor and castle) belonged to the earl of Lancaster. Frodsham, Weaverham, Over and Darnhall had belonged to the earl of Chester, but the last three were granted to Vale Royal abbey by Edward I.

The extent to which the county suffered from the ravages of the Black Death must remain a matter for conjecture. That the pestilence wrought havoc in Cheshire[1] may be seen in the deaths of the heads of three of the religious houses,[2] of a larger proportion of the clergy [3] and many of the laity.[4] For the most part, however, the evidence relates to financial or material loss and only indirectly to human mortality. The farm of mills is less ; [5] the farm of fisheries is less ; [6] the revenue from the lord's oven is less.[7] Plots of land lie uncultivated ; [8] houses are unoccupied ; [9] the eyre of the forest is not held ; [10] mills stand for months in need of repair ;[11] even the Dee Bridge remains for months unrepaired ;[12] while the farm of the passage of Lawton suddenly drops to little more than half its former value.[13] These circumstances point to a serious disorganisation of society consequent upon a high mortality, but the extent of the loss cannot be determined.

The disorganisation increased as the consequences of the pestilence became more fully felt. The peasantry quickly seized the opportunity to demand higher wages and to move afield, while dealers began to raise the price of their wares. As early as 1350-1351,[14] efforts to enforce the Ordinance of Labourers may be traced, four townships being amerced for failing to present workmen " taking wages against the statute," while six assessors were amerced for not coming before the sheriff to inquire concerning the offending workmen.[15] From that date, the evidence, though mainly confined to the hundred of Macclesfield

[1] Mr. W. Rees states that the epidemic spread northward from Hereford and Shropshire to Cheshire (*The Black Death in Wales* (*R.H.S. Trans.*, 4th Ser., Vol. IV, 1920), 118).

[2] The abbot of St. Werburgh's, the prioress of St. Mary's, Chester, and the prior of Norton (Morris, *Diocesan Histories: Chester*, 85 ; Gasquet, *The Great Pestilence*, 145).

[3] *Ibid.*, 145. See also Appendix D, 178.

[4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 152, 153, 155, 195, 145, 146. I have looked through the " Plea Rolls," Chester, 29/59 (21-22 Edward III) and Chester 29/60 (22-23 Edward III) for evidence of the pestilence. There is very little direct evidence but the number of widows engaged in suits appears very considerable. Higden (or his continuator) is silent on the subject so far as it affected Cheshire.

[5] *Ibid.*, 189.

[6] *Ibid.*, 189.

[7] *Ibid.*, 144.

[8] *Ibid.*, 150, 151, 193, 204.

[9] *Ibid.*, 150, 183, 186. There was no farmer of the forge in Macclesfield forest from Whitsuntide to Michaelmas 23 Edward III, *propter pestilentiam.* "Ministers' Accounts," 802/4, m. 1.

[10] *Chamber. Accts.*, 147, 148.

[11] *Ibid.*, 144.

[12] *Ibid.*, 129, 141, 179.

[13] It had been 46s. 8d. in 1347-1348. In 1350-1351 it was only 25s. It rose again in 1354-1355 to 30s. and in 1357-1358 to 36s. 8d. *Ibid.*, 112, 120, 162, 171, 208, 224, 238, 250, 264.

[14] Miss B. H. Putnam stated that " other sources show that the justices of labourers were acting (in Cheshire) in 1352, 1353, 1356, 1357, 1358 and 1359." ("The Justices of Labourers in the Fourteenth Century" in *E.H.R.*, XXI, 524.) I have searched the big " Eyre Roll, " Chester, 17/13, and found breaches of the statute as early as 1350 (membranes 10, 11, 15) and 1351 (m. 4).

[15] *Chamber. Accts.*, 173.

throws much light on the prevailing conditions. At first (1350), infringements of the statute are recorded along with other offences in the eyre rolls.[1] The lists of offenders grow fuller, and by 1352 there are separate rolls[2] of indictments of workmen and servants, while in 1353, justices are appointed for the express purpose of inquiring into infringements of the statute.[3] In the earliest rolls the charge is general, the words "to the loss of the people" or "broke the statute" being used and followed by the fine which is commonly 12d. The nature of the offence, however, is not wholly in doubt, for the offenders are usually described as harvesters. In the succeeding sessions, the nature of the offence is often specifically stated. In 1351 the charge is usually that of leaving the neighbourhood (*exivit a patria*) and in somewhat later sessions its gravity is increased by the words "in the autumn"[4]—pointing clearly to harvesters, or perhaps in some instances, ploughmen. The fines for this breach of the statute are usually 6d. or 12d.

From 1352 onward the charge of taking excessive wages occurs,[5] but the actual figure is seldom given. The offender's trade is often stated and in some instances the offender is a woman—a servant girl or spinner. Sometimes this charge is coupled with that of leaving the neighbourhood.

As early as 1350, the rise in prices of goods is noted. John Pymmesonne, the tanner, has been selling leather contrary to the statute and is fined 6s. 8d.[6] Henri de Strotes, the shoemaker, has sold shoes dearer than was his wont and is fined 3s. 4d. William de Wakefield, Thomas de Pekeshull and Agnes who was the wife of William de Hope have committed the same breach of the statute and are fined the same sum. William le Priestsknavesman has taken more for repairing baskets than he used to take. Hugh de Lawton, the smith, has charged more than he was wont.[7] Adam del Lodges, shoemaker, has sold shoes and broken the statute.[8] In these instances, the rise in prices is simply explained and simply dealt with.

A rise of a somewhat different nature was noticed at Chester, where the commonalty complained in 1351, that whereas "aforetime every craftsman used to live by his art or craft . . . now . . . people of the commonalty are wont to combine one craft with another, as for instance tailors have become drapers, and shoemakers have become tanners and

[1] E.g. "Eyre Roll," Chester, 17/13, m. 4. [2] Ibid., 17/13, m. 1.
[3] "Indictment Roll," Chester, 25/19, m. 3.
[4] Examples, A, B, C, etc., exierunt a patria ad dampnum populi, quilibet eorum XIId. A, B, C, etc., fregit statutum et exierunt a patria ad dampnum, quilibet eorum VId. A (messor), B (falcator), etc., exierunt a patria tempore autumpni (Chester, 17/13, m. 1, Chester 25/19, m. 93).
[5] For this also the words "in the autumn" may be added: *ceperunt mercedem superfluam in autumpno* (Chester, 25/19, m. 3).
[6] "Eyre Rolls," Chester, 17/13, m. 11. [7] Ibid., m. 15.
[8] "Indictment Roll," Chester, 25/19, m. 3, *in dorso*.

so on ; whereby merchandises have become dearer to the great damage of the commonalty."[1] In this instance, no reference is made to the Statute of Labourers either in the complaint or in the Black Prince's reply. Indeed, the examples quoted would afford some grounds for the view that the changes were developments in the organisation of trade whereby certain men sought to combine under one management two allied trades—developments which the citizens, already apprehensive of rising prices, viewed with great disfavour. This may be the true explanation, but in view of the date of the complaint it is highly probable that the opportunity for the changes was afforded by the disturbed conditions which resulted from the pestilence.

The unsettled conditions continued and breaches of the statute by workmen may be traced for several years. Girls are leaving the service of their mistresses, men are leaving the neighbourhood and taking excessive wages.[2] In no instance is there any indication of the locality to which men have gone. Possibly many of them went no great distance and returned to their homes in the winter. Some may have become wanderers, working when work could be got, at other times joining some band of evil-doers. Some may have been numbered among the Cheshire soldiers who fought with the Black Prince. Whatever their end may have been, it is clear that for many years the efforts to enforce the Ordinance and Statute of Labourers proved ineffectual.

The population presents other interesting aspects. Both in composition and character it differed from the population of the midland and eastern counties. Racially as well as politically, the county of Chester was a border land. The earldom, which marked the early western limit of Norman power, marked also broadly the limit of Saxon invasions.[3] The Dee valley contained a proportion of Welsh population, and one writer goes so far as to state that " in the western parts of the present counties of Chester and Shropshire " the inhabitants were " very largely Welsh."[4] It is difficult to find in the evidence available sufficient grounds for quite so broad a statement, but it is quite clear that the Welsh element in the population of the Dee basin was considerable. Higden noticed the mixture of the two peoples in Cheshire.[5] Deeds relating to lands along the eastern bank of the Dee contain the names of many Welsh owners.[6] The surname Le Walshmon occurs

[1] " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 87.

[2] " Indictment Roll," Chester, 25/19, mm. 336, 426 (37 Edward III). Commissions are appointed to inquire into infringements of the statute (*Recog. Rolls*, 156, 174, 181, 184, 409, 423, 437, 444).

[3] The interesting problem raised by the existence of Maelor Saesneg is discussed by Major P. T. Godsall in " The Conquest of Britain by the Angles," *Journal of the Chester Architectural, Archæological and Historic Society*, N.S., XVI, 90-96.

[4] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 7.

[5] *Polychronicon*, II, 35.

[6] Some places in which Welshmen were living are—Caldecott, Shocklach, Oldcastle, Egerton, Crewe (by Farndon), Newton, Malpas Overwich (*Ancient*

occasionally [1] and Walsh (or Walssh or Walsch) occurs more frequently.[2] In times of peace Welshmen lived in Chester. When hostilities were imminent, they were naturally suspected. They were not allowed to carry knives (save for their dinner) or enter the city after sunset, or remain within it during the night.[3]

As for the character of the population evidence is abundant, and it points unmistakably to a degree of violence which seemed noteworthy even to minds accustomed to frequent strife, disorder and bloodshed. There was in mediæval society an element of violence such as is natural in a country where the rule of law is not fully established or cannot always be fully vindicated. It is, therefore, the more significant that at such a time the men of Cheshire should acquire a reputation for turbulence and violence. This reputation belongs to the whole period under discussion. It is attributed to them when the lord Edward received the earldom.[4] It follows them throughout the fourteenth century, and it comes to a climax in the outbursts of the chroniclers of the reign of Richard II.[5]

This king had a bodyguard of Cheshire archers to whom almost every possible crime is attributed. According to contemporary writers, they were very evil; they belaboured and beat men and pillaged with impunity; they committed adulteries and homicides and other great wrongs; they were bestial by nature and ready for all kinds of villany. Raised from the lowest occupations, they lorded it over their superiors, and their insolence and arrogance knew no bounds. They considered themselves the equals of the nobles and even the king. So long as he put his trust in them, they assured him, they would defend him against all England, nay against the whole world.[6]

This reputation deserves examination. Fame for "violence, turbulence and martial prowess" might easily enough be handed down in legend, exaggerated in song and jest as well by political prejudice,

Deeds, VI, c. 3910, 3927, 3949, 4043, 4463, 6241, 6242, 6243, 6246, 6299, 6310). Further instances of Welsh names occur at Coddington in "Eaton" MSS., Edward I/43 and Edward III/46, 62, 74. In "Plea Roll," Chester, 29/59, m. 32, are the names of three Welshmen (outlaws) living at Worthenbury, Shocklach and "Wylinton." There is a sprinkling of Welsh names in the "Chester" MS. e.g., "Crownmote Roll," 1317-1318; "Prentice Court Roll," 1320-1321; and in *County Ct. Rolls*, 66, 67, 154.

[1] *Recog. Rolls*, 153, 513; *Chester Chartulary*, II, 387.

[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 55, 195; *V.R.L. Book*, 40, 101, 157. *An Early Rental of Sir Peter Thornton* (printed in *Cheshire Sheaf*, 1896), 56. "Assize Roll," Chester, 25/4, mm. 14, 17, 32, *in dorso*; "Chester" MS., Pentice Court, 1318-1319.

[3] Morris, *Chester* (*Doc.*), 46, 370. See also *Recog. Rolls*, 102, 111, 114. Some Welsh workmen also assisted in the repair of Chester mills in 1348 (Morris, *Chester*, 103).

[4] Tout, *Edward I*, 16.

[5] The lawlessness continued in the reign of Henry IV (Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, I, 121, 141), and was complicated by opposition to Lancastrian rule.

[6] *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*, 208, 237; *Chronicon Adam de Usk*, 23, 26.

and have little relation to truth. The deeds of Cheshire men had, indeed, passed, or were at that time passing, into legend.

"I can rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolfe erle of Chestre."

says Sloth in the *Vision of Piers Plowman*.[1] The praises of Knolles and Calveley in their many heroic exploits in France and Spain had also passed into verse,[2] while the work of Danyers in capturing the Count of Tankerville[3] and the deeds of Audley and Delves[4] were well known. It is necessary, therefore, in considering this reputation, to make allowance not only for the political prejudice of writers who looked with disfavour on Richard II, but also for the glamour which had grown around brave deeds.

An examination of more trustworthy evidence does, however, reveal ample grounds for the belief that the reputation was broadly just. While it is not possible to estimate mathematically the relative criminality of English counties, it is possible to establish the fact that violence and turbulence were both frequent and widespread in Cheshire.

The general lawlessness of the county has already been illustrated in connection with the safety of communications.[5] It showed itself in attacks on human life, in the presence of robbers, in the formation of armed bands who wandered about the county, in occasional savage outbursts against the monks. It is to be distinguished from the risings of the villeins on the Vale Royal manors, and those in Wirral. It was not the cause of the rebellions of 1353 and 1393. It is, however, very closely connected with all these movements, for, although they sprang from specific causes, the magnitude and bitterness were in each case increased by the lawlessness of the participants.

A few examples may be added to those already quoted to illustrate the state of the county. Murders occurred with a frequency that appals a modern mind. At least six Cheshire murderers earned their pardons by military service under the Black Prince in Gascony; another was pardoned for service at the siege of Calais, and two others at the request of Sir Hugh Calveley and the duke of Lancaster.[6] The victims

[1] Passus, V, b. 402.

[2] Higden, VIII, 358 (O Robert Knollis, per te fit Francis mollis, etc.); Wright, *Political Songs*, I, 95, 108 (Knolles); *ibid.*, I, 107, 118, 121 (Calveley). Sir Hugh Calveley's name formed a convenient rhyme:—

Illis opponis te, Calverlensis Hugonis
Virtus mucronis ictibus apta bonis.

See also Froissart (Berner's), I, 400, II, 30.

[3] At Crecy: See *Recognizance Rolls*, 292; Ormerod, III, 671.

[4] Ibid., 518-519.

[5] *Vide supra*, 70-71.

[6] *Recog. Rolls*, 12, 57, 58, 63, 113, 329, 345; *C.P.R.* (1345-1348), 549. The grant of pardons to criminals in return for military service was occasionally used as an expedient for raising troops. Cf. Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 240. In 1360 many scores of men were granted pardons on account of military service, *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 376-402.

in these cases seem to have been as obscure as the murderers, but among other victims are a mayor of Chester,[1] an abbot of Vale Royal, a monk and a servant of the same abbey,[2] two monks of Combermere,[3] a " prechour " of Nantwich, a ferryman of Northwich [4] and a miller of Stockport.[5]

Violence in a degree little short of homicide was common both in the city and the country. A trivial incident at an inn leads to an affray with bloodshed.[6] A dispute in Bridge Street, Chester, is rapidly magnified into a quarrel in which partisans are wounded and one killed.[7] At Poynton a hermit's head is broken.[8] At Legh one man attacks another with a lath.[9] At Pownall there is a stabbing affair.[10] In Chester itself a nurse is bound by her hair to a post and beaten.[11] A woman keeping her vigil before the Cross in St. John's Church is carried off and ravished.[12] Instances might be multiplied almost indefinitely. As Canon Morris said, " Assaults with great violence and bloodshed . . . occur with disagreeable frequency. The hue and cry is raised,[13] and . . . the whole neighbourhood is thrown into uproar." [14]

The armed bands whose terrorism has been mentioned, occur at various parts of the fourteenth century, but chiefly in the reign of Richard II. A striking example of their power is seen in 1318 when " certain foreign men of the county to a great multitude " made an attack on the city of Chester, killed some of the defenders on the walls, dominated the approaches to the city both by land and water, and for a time were able to rob and maltreat passers-by.[15]

A still more striking example is related at great length in the " Assize Roll " [16] of 1375, and may be summarised here for the light it throws

[1] *Recog. Rolls*, 363; Morris, *Chester*, 24. [2] *V.R.L. Book*, 51, 164.
[3] " Harl." MS. 2079/68. In this instance the murderer was a fellow-monk. *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 157. [4] *Chamber. Accts.*, 210; *Recog. Rolls*, 366.
[5] " Eyre Roll "—Chester, 17/13, m. 32. This large roll (11-25 Edward III) contains evidence of several other murders in the hundred of Macclesfield. See membranes 28, 32 and 32 dorse. The " Plea Roll," Chester, 29/60 (22-23 Edward III) also contains records of many murders—especially membranes 8, 9, 24. For further instances of murder see *Recog. Rolls*, 21, 65, 77, 152, 168, 212, 220, 233, 258, 449, 454, 487; *Chamber. Accts.*, 209, 225, 265, 267; *C.P.R.* (1334-1338), 324. [6] *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, Vol. I, No. 1713. [7] *County Ct. Rolls*, 179.
[8] " Indictment Roll," Chester, 25/19, m. 31*b*.
[9] " Assize Roll," Chester, 17/1.
[10] " Indictment Roll," Chester 25/9, m. 39. [11] Morris, *Chester*, 188.
[12] *Ibid.*, 172. Other instances of rape: " Chester " MS.—Crownmote Roll, 1317-1318; *County Ct. Rolls*, 161, 174, 177, 215, 218, 220.
[13] Instances of hue and cry: *County Ct. Rolls*, 89, 161, 179, 187, 217, 247.
[14] Morris, *Chester*, 188.
[15] *C.Cl.R.* (1318-1323), 12. The meaning of " foreign " in this phrase is not clear. It would appear to indicate that the band was not wholly composed of Cheshire men. Several of the earl of Lancaster's men were imprisoned later for their part in the affair (*ibid.*, 23). Since, however, the earl had acquired by marriage the Cheshire estates of the Lacy family, some of his men were not " foreigners." [16] " Assize Roll," Chester, 25/4, m. 32.

on the condition of the county. A small group of relatives called Bulkelegh headed by a certain William de Bulkelegh of Cheadle made themselves a public danger. William himself had assaulted a mason called Helpeston,[1] believing him to be a man of the same name, employed by the abbot of Vale Royal. Several of the party lay in wait near Vale Royal abbey and so ill-treated the monks that no one dared leave the abbey and the inmates were in danger of being starved. Thereupon the bailiff of Northwich hundred set out with an armed band to arrest William de Bulkelegh at his manor. William, however, boldly went to the bailiff's house in Middlewich, searched it and swore that if any men came to arrest him, he would cut their heads off. Fear apparently seized the bailiff and (the "Roll" proceeds), "no other bailiff has dared to make any attachment till justice be done" to William de Bulkelegh.

Emboldened by success, William now widened the scope of his activities. When the county court was being held, he gathered a band of men from Cheshire and Staffordshire and lay in ambush along the road at Wethfeld waiting for the justice, John Alayn. Later, when his men numbered a hundred, he placed them in hiding along all the roads leading to Middlewich and prevented the holding of the earl's court. A second time his band lay in ambush and prevented the court being held at Middlewich, and indeed no court was held for half a year. But in contempt of the earl, William made one of his own servants proclaim a court. His brother sat as seneschal and others of his choice filled other offices. They held the assize of bread and ale, laid down the prices of corn and other merchandise and had them proclaimed in the market-place.

William then passed towards Nantwich where, attended by a great band of men armed as for war, he lay waiting for some time and so pestered and menaced the people that they dared not even go to church, and many of them placed themselves and their goods under his protection in contempt of the earl. And (the "Roll" concludes) "justice still remains to be done."[2]

Another phase of the work of these bands is seen when Cheshire is used as a base for operations elsewhere. "The Rolls of Parliament are full of petitions relating to outrages committed in the border counties by Welsh and Cheshire men who fled back to the protection of their lords and defied their pursuers to obtain redress."[3] In 1360, the abbot of Combermere gathered a band of malefactors, rode to Chesthull in Salop and diverted a watercourse which supplied a mill.[4] In 1384,

[1] There were several men of this name who became masons, *vide supra*, 95.
[2] William de Bulkelegh was pardoned at the instance of John of Gaunt (*Recog. Rolls*), 71.
[3] Stewart-Brown, "The Avowries of Cheshire," *E.H.R.*, XXIX, 4.
[4] *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 418.

the people of Derbyshire complained that "divers disturbers of the peace assemble in the county of Chester, enter the county of Derby, and daily perpetrate therein thefts, homicides, robberies and rapes,"[1] and escape back into Cheshire. In 1399, complaints arose from Shropshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire about the bodies of armed men who came from Cheshire, committed great robberies, and returned to Cheshire with the booty.[2]

Still another phase of this same lawless spirit is seen in certain savage attacks on the monks. By the fourteenth century, the general veneration of the monastic life had declined in Cheshire as elsewhere. The monks were now chiefly remarkable as great landowners, progressive in relation to agriculture, but conservative in respect of their privileges. The rigid maintenance of their legal rights over their villeins led not only to conflicts respecting the obligations of villeinage, but also to dreadful brutality. In 1309, "malefactors" assaulted the abbot of Combermere at Nantwich, slew one of his fellow-monks, burnt his house and carried away a large quantity of his goods. During an inquiry made at the king's command, the same men made further inroads on the abbot's goods, maltreated his servants and assumed such a menacing attitude that for some time the abbot dared not return to Combermere.[3]

Similar incidents occurred on the Vale Royal estates. In 1320 one of the abbot's servants was barbarously murdered by men who afterwards cut his head off and played football with it, while a monk returning from Chester only escaped death by flight.[4] In 1340 a number of men burnt the abbot's houses and crops in Chester and stole a great quantity of his goods and animals.[5] The lawlessness reached its climax in the murder of the abbot Peter (the most noteworthy of his line) and a fellow-monk called Walter le Walche.[6]

Lawlessness, therefore, in various forms was rampant, and the extent of the evil from the governmental point of view is illustrated by the detention in Chester Castle of eighteen young boys as security for the good behaviour of the citizens.[7]

The spirit which gave rise to such frequent disorder was the product of several causes, some of which were clearly understood by the chroniclers. "Because of their fickleness," says one writer, "the people of those parts are more ready and accustomed to doing such things (viz., vengeance and rapine); because of former wars and local disputes

[1] *C.P.R.* (1381-1385), 495.
[2] *Recog. Rolls*, 100.
[3] *C.Cl.R.* (1307-1313), 157.
[4] *V.R.L. Book*, 50, 51.
[5] *C.P.R.* (1338-1340), 485.
[6] *V.R.L. Book*, 164. The monks of Chester seem to have escaped these fierce attacks, but they suffered heavy damage to their woods in 1374 ("Harl." 2071/95a).
[7] *C.Cl.R.* (1323-1327), 169, 187. Edward III was petitioned for their release. He acknowledged their innocence and agreed to liberate them, six at a time, provided that in the event of disorder the boy hostages should return to the castle.

they more readily resort to arms ; and they are more difficult to control than other people."[1] Border warfare, continued through several generations, had produced a population that was used to arms and impatient of restraint. To more law-abiding subjects, the conduct of such men naturally seemed brutal and precipitate.

A second factor tending to the same end was the protection Chester offered to criminals. St. Werburgh's abbey at Chester[2] and the abbey of Vale Royal had the privilege of sanctuary.[3] There were secular sanctuaries at Hoole Heath, at Farndon and at Rudheath, and there was the avowry system, already mentioned, which by the fourteenth century, probably offered "little advantage to any but persons who had committed crime or needy debtors."[4] The influx of men for whom these facilities afforded security must have had a prejudicial effect on the character of the people. That their numbers were not small may be judged from the value of the leases of the avowries of the whole county, for while the annual fee paid by the avowry man was usually 4d., the lease was worth as much as £40 in 1309, though £16 to £18 is nearer the average of the next half century.[5]

A still further cause of lawlessness may be seen at times in the irresponsible conduct of the very men who were primarily responsible for peace and order. During the weak administration under Edward II, when the ministers took boy hostages of the citizens of Chester, complaints were made of the "negligence and extortion committed by the bailiffs, farmers and ministers of the earl."[6] The keepers of the peace for the county, under cover of their office, went armed into Chester, and terrorised the people.[7] They farmed their offices, neglected their duties, and even concealed offenders against the peace.[8] These abuses were remedied by the ministers of Edward III, but they must have had a very evil effect on a people already prone to lawlessness.

The resultant conditions were, of course, by no means peculiar to Cheshire. Violence and lawlessness were found in the neighbouring counties.[9] Indeed "mediæval society was always disorderly."[10] In Cheshire, however, circumstances had combined to accentuate a spirit that existed in greater or less degree throughout the kingdom. On the one hand, the softening influence of peace had been inoperative. On

[1] *Chronicon Monasterii S. Albani*, 159.
[2] Morris, *Diocesan History, Chester*, 75.
[3] See *V.R.L. Book*, 82, for an instance of shelter afforded to criminals.
[4] R. Stewart-Brown in *E.H.R.*, XXIX, 54.
[5] *Ibid.*, 50, 51 ; *Recog. Rolls*, 114, 196, 243, 280, 285, 327.
[6] *C.P.R.* (1317-1321), 134. [7] *Ibid.*, 200.
[8] *C.Cl.R.* (1323-1327), 226.
[9] For examples : Staffordshire : J. Conway Davies, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II*, 45 ; Bolland, *The General Eyre*, 77, 79. Shropshire : *ibid.*, 83 ; Lancashire, *C.Cl.R.* (1327-1330), 402. In this last instance, bands of armed men are said to meet near the border of Cheshire. [10] Tout, *Edward II*, 237.

the other, the continuous influx of offenders had kept alive a spirit which in other parts was gradually dying down. The inhabitants were, therefore, impatient of restraint and given to outbursts of violence and lawlessness. Fame magnified their valour. At a later date prejudice magnified their vices.

But the qualities which rendered the men of Cheshire hateful to lovers of peace and the constitution, rendered them the more valuable as soldiers. Even their detractors never denied their fighting qualities. Evil they might be, and boastful and arrogant. They were at least efficient and they remained loyal to Richard II. Experience had given them a superiority in warfare [1] which the three Edwards valued highly. In the wars of the period, therefore, they played a large part. Their military achievements are not strictly relevant to the subject of this work, but the number of troops raised and used has an important bearing on the economic history of the county.

Military service in Wales has already been mentioned. It was in many instances explicitly stated as a condition of tenure, while service beyond the eastern boundary of Cheshire was just as explicitly stated to be optional. In addition to obligatory service, which was, of course of limited duration,[2] a good deal of paid service was performed. In relation to Cheshire's small population, the number of men raised was larger in itself, and relatively much larger than the numbers raised in neighbouring counties.

At the opening of the Welsh campaign of 1277, the infantry under arms amounted to 2576 men. Of these, 1000 "mixed archers and foot spearmen" were drawn from Cheshire, while Shropshire and Staffordshire together sent 640, and Lancashire 120.[3] In addition to this 1000, there was a corps of 100 picked archers from Macclesfield, who,

[1] "It would be just to say that all other Englishmen were more raw and unwarlike in 1298 than the men of Chester and Shropshire in 1277, for the latter had had some experience against Llewellyn already, the former absolutely none before the wars against Scotland began." "The Anglo-Saxon had to be taught to fight, and those counties first became warlike which were nearest to the theatre of war, the borders of Wales" (Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 97). The Cheshire archers at the battle of Shrewsbury were "reckoned among the best in the country" (*Wylie*, I, 359).

[2] As examples of the quotas due in respect of lands and vills the following may be quoted:—

Appleton	2 footmen	(Ormerod, I, 615).
Ashley	1 horse-soldier	(Ormerod, I, 556).
Frodsham	8 footmen	Beamont, *Frodsham*, 44.
Macclesfield	8 ,,	
Middlewich	12 ,,	
Northwich	12 ,,	
Weaverham	12 ,,	(*Cal. Fine Rolls* (1272-1307), 357).
Weston	1 horse-soldier	(*Inquisitions post-mortem*, III, 144).

A long list of quotas is given in "Harl." 2115/136-138.

[3] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 128.

in contrast with the other infantry served from the beginning almost to the end of the war, and received a special wage of 3d. a day.[1] In August, the army was reinforced by 620 new footmen from Cheshire.[2] The tenants-in-chief were in arms continuously and were praised by the king for having rendered more than their *servitium debitum*.[3] Guncelin de Badlesmere, the justice, carried out the organisation for the concentration of troops at Chester, and Reginald de Grey, an ex-justice, played a great part in the fighting.

In the second Welsh war (1282-1283), the circumstances were similar. Grey was now justice,[4] and as soon as Edward heard of the attack at Hawarden, he ordered him to take command at Chester.[5] For the next few months, Grey with a body of lances, held the country round Hawarden and Hope, and concentrated both men and supplies at Chester.[6] He again took a leading part in the campaign, and in the following January (1283) when the army had increased to 5000 foot, no less than 2000 were men of Cheshire, and 1000 men of Shropshire.[7]

The rising of Rhys in 1287 was not in North Wales and its suppression might reasonably have been regarded as outside the duties of the Cheshire men. Their experience was, however, too valuable to be overlooked, and although they had never before been summoned to march south, 700 of them were taken, a promise being given that this service should not be drawn into a precedent.[8]

During the rebellion of Madoc, Maelgun and Morgan in 1294-1295, the Cestrians were again in the field to the number of 1300,[9] and when Edward advanced into South Wales in May, 1295, he was accompanied by 1200 footmen of Cheshire, 1000 of Shropshire and 150 of Lancashire.[10]

This was the last serious rising for over a century. As the principality was now annexed to the English crown, the old obligation to serve in Wales had lost some of its original meaning. The obligation was, however, preserved and the Cestrians were mustered whenever trouble threatened in North Wales.[11]

But by this time, experienced soldiers were needed for a new field, and the March of Wales, hitherto the only training ground in the kingdom, was called upon to furnish large numbers of troops for the Scotch wars. Letters patent of 1297 refer to "the 4000 footmen of the county of Chester arrayed . . . to march against the Scots," and promise that this journey shall not become a precedent.[12] This number is so large that an error might be suspected. It is probably more than

[1] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 34, 90, 95, 128, 130, 134.
[2] *Ibid.*, 131. [3] *Ibid.*, 119, 120.
[4] Appointed 14th November, 1281, *C.P.R.* (1272-1281), 464.
[5] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 154. [6] *Ibid.*, 156. [7] *Ibid.*, 190.
[8] *Ibid.*, 207. [9] *Ibid.*, 246, 263. [10] *Ibid.*, 264.
[11] Even the minor rising of 1316 led to orders to muster all the able men in Cheshire and Shropshire, *C.P.R.* (1313-1317), 443.
[12] *Ibid.* (1292-1301), 324.

the county could raise, and it appears that the number paid for was only 3000.[1]

To raise even 3000 must have been a very heavy burden for a county which had sent so many men to the wars of the preceding twenty years. In the following year, 1000 men were requisitioned from Cheshire and 1000 from Lancashire for the army which fought at Falkirk, the remainder of the army being Welsh.[2]

The relatively high proportion of Cheshire men engaged in military operations continues during the fourteenth century. In 1308 the county was required to raise 400 men for service in Scotland, while Staffordshire and Shropshire raised 300 and 200 respectively.[3] In 1322, a force of 1000 footmen was to be raised and sent to Newcastle-on-Tyne.[4] In 1361, when nine counties (chiefly in the west Midlands) raised an average of 86 archers each for service in Ireland, Cheshire's contribution was 180.[5]

It is not possible to summarise thus simply the numbers of men raised for the long-drawn-out war with France, for no complete statistics are available, and the small parties who left Cheshire for service under the Black Prince were very numerous. The magnitude of the drain on the county's resources cannot therefore be accurately stated. Orders were issued for the raising of 100 Cheshire archers in 1345 and 200 in 1346,[6] and from this date down to the early years of the reign of Richard II, small bodies of troops passed at intervals over to France.[7] The records of the period, though lacking in numerical completeness, abound in personal detail. This is not the place to deal with personal exploits on the field of battle, and indeed the work of several Cheshire knights is already very well known. The deeds of Sir Thomas Danyers at Crecy,[8] of Sir Hugh Calveley at the Battle of the Thirty at Auray, and at Navarette,[9] of Sir Robert Knolles in his numerous adventures in France,[10] and of Lord Audley and his four squires,[11] have become part

[1] Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 285.

[2] *Ibid.*, 96, 285.

[3] *C.P.R.* (1307-1313), 82.

[4] *Ibid.* (1321-1324), 174, 177. A promise was given that the service should not become a precedent.

[5] The names and numbers are :—

Lancashire, 200 ; Cheshire, 180 ; Staffordshire, Shropshire, Gloucester, Hereford, 60 each ; Leicester, Derby, Worcester, 40 each ; Warwickshire, 30, *C.P.R.* (1361-1364), 21.

[6] Morris, *Chester*, 24, *n.* 1.

[7] *Deputy Keeper's Reports*, XXVIII, 46, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70 ; XXIX, 49-53.

[8] He captured the Count of Tankerville, Chamberlain of France (*Recog. Rolls*, 292 ; Ormerod, III, 671).

[9] *Dictionary of National Biography ;* Froissart ; Ormerod, II, 767.

[10] Froissart (Berners'), I, 399, 400 ; II, 30, 279, 280, 343, 352. Also *Journal of the Architectural, Archæological and Historic Society for Chester and North Wales*, Vol. XIV, N.S.

[11] Tradition says the four squires were Sir John Delves of Doddington, Sir Robert Fulleshurst of Barthomley, Sir Thomas Dutton of Dutton and Sir John Hawkeston of Wrinehill (Ormerod, III, 518).

of the national history. Of equal importance from the point of view of this work are the footmen, some scores of whom served in Gascony and especially at Poitiers.[1] Many of these men the Prince with his usual liberality rewarded. To one he gave the keepership of a park, to another an annuity for life, to a third a grant of land, to others pardons for felonies or murders.

We have, therefore, a population, scanty in numbers, famed for violence, experienced in war, playing the chief part in the conquest of Wales and bearing its share in the burden of the Scottish and French wars.

The manner in which these men extended the bounds of cultivation has already been traced. We have noted the circumstances under which the uncultivated waste was diminished, the marshes drained and the land fertilised by the use of marl. It would be fitting to close this study with a discussion of the status and well-being of the peasant. What was the size of his holding? and what the conditions of tenure? What measure of well-being did he enjoy? and to what extent had he succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of villeinage? These questions can hardly be wholly avoided, but we do not propose to embark on an extensive discussion here.

In the first place, an exhaustive treatment of social conditions lies outside the scope of this work.

In the second place, the evidence is disappointingly small—much too small for generalisations of any value. Concerning the peasants on two of the Vale Royal manors, there is a good deal of information. Concerning those on the manors of other religious houses there is practically none. "Ministers' Accounts," of course, in some instances throw a little light on the subject by revealing the sale of "works," but, for the most part, the evidence is fragmentary.

Thirdly, even if the evidence were more considerable than it is, it would be necessary to consider the condition of the peasantry in Cheshire in close relation with the condition of the peasantry in North Wales. We have been able to isolate for treatment many impersonal topics; we have even ventured to discuss the character of the people, but in a

[1] Among the Jodrell MSS. is a "pass" by which the Black Prince gave "William Jodrell, one of our archers," leave to pass into England (December, 1355). There is a photograph of the "pass" in the John Rylands Library, and a description of the seal in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. VII, 106.

The earl of Salisbury informed the Black Prince that many of his tenants in Bosley, Neston and Lee had been chosen to go with the prince as archers, and asked if they might remain in Cheshire. The request was granted as the earl himself was to go abroad with the Prince, "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 39. For a list of men who served in France, see Appendix E, 180.

region where both the field system [1] and the acre [2] are of Celtic origin, it would be hazardous—even were sufficient evidence available—to discuss holdings and tenure without constant reference to conditions in Wales.

In these concluding pages, therefore, we are restricted to the narrow field of quoting instances without building thereon any generalisations.

The evidence of individual holdings is mainly confined to the middle of the county. Such holdings, of course, differ widely in size and value. We take first the Thornton rental (of 1354) [3] covering lands in the northern part of Delamere forest :—

In Helsby there are 30 tenants of whom the following are typical :—

William, son of Henry :	1 messuage 1 bovate and ¾ acre	12s. 9½d.
Walter, son of Henry :	1 messuage 1 bovate . .	11s. 0d.
William de Dunham :	1 messuage 1 bovate . .	10s. 6d.
Thomas, son of Robert :	1 messuage ½ bovate except the eighth part of one butt of land	7s. 7½d.

In Kingsley there are 48 tenants of whom the following are typical :—

William del Broke :	1 messuage and 5 butts . .	10s. 0d.
William Alkoe :	1 messuage and 5 butts . .	8s. 0d.
Hamo de Runcorn :	1 messuage and ½ butt . .	3s. 0d.
William de Dauber :	1 messuage and 2 acres . .	6s. 0d.

The holdings at Thornton and Elton (where there are 35 tenants) are similar. At Cuddington (10 tenants) and Onston (36 tenants), the holdings are mostly smaller, such, for example, as :—

William le Kynge :	1 messuage ½ acre and 1 butt .	2s. 9d.

Just east of the Weaver, in the earl's manor of Drakelowe, a detailed survey [4] was made in 1336. The holdings are scattered in as many as seven parcels, and rented chiefly at 6d. an acre. The following are examples :—

[1] The field system of Cheshire has been treated at length in Gray, *English Field Systems*, 249-258. Professor Gray described it as a "somewhat puzzling field system" (*op. cit.*, 253), and among his conclusions are the following : "the midland system had no hold upon the borderland of the river Dee" (*op. cit.*, 256) ; "Chester (i.e. in respect of its field system) allies itself more closely with Wales than with the territory to the east" (*op. cit.*, 257) ; "the arrangement was like that which in Scotland, Wales and Ireland was called runrig" (*op. cit.*, 258). In view of this authoritative work, I have made no attempt at a treatment which would have resulted in little more than a repetition of Professor Gray's conclusions. I may, however, add that he appears to have been unaware of the Vale Royal rental in *V.R.L. Book*, 92-113. The extent of Drakelowe ("Rentals and Surveys," 894), and the transcript of the extent of Tarvin ("Harl." MS. 2115/230) also throw light on the subject.

[2] See Appendix G, p. 187.

[3] "An Early Rental of Sir Peter de Thornton of Thornton in the Moors," in the *Cheshire Sheaf* (1896), 53, 55, 58, 62.

[4] "Rentals and Surveys," 894.

Thomas, son of Hugh of Drakelowe : 1 messuage 35 acres 36 perches (aggregate) . . . . . 17s. 6½d.
John, son of Richard of Cranage : 3 roods 3 perches in one parcel ; 1 rood 40 perches in another parcel with two forelands . . . . . 6½d.
Roger of Hope and Matilda, heir of William, son of Henry of Hulme hold in six parcels : ½ acre 9 perches ; 1½ roods 13 perches ; 34 perches ; 3½ roods 6 perches ; 1½ roods 9 perches ; 1 acre 1½ roods 19 perches (*non frussata*) . . . 2s. 1d.

West of the Weaver lay the Vale Royal manors of Over and Darnhall for which a rental (date *c.* 1334) is included in the *Ledger Book*. Here also the details ot the various parcels are given. We select two :— Richard del Heath [1] holds a messuage and 11 parcels, eight of which are half an acre in extent, and the remainder an acre. He pays 6s. 6d. The lands of Roger, son of Pymme [2] may be set out at length. He holds

	Extent.	s.	d.
In Oldrenfeld	3¼ acres . .	3	3
,, ,, ...	a plot . .	0	2
In Longacres	1¼ acres . .	1	0
,, ,, ...	small plot . .	0	0½
In Bradenale	1¼ acres . .	0	10
Next Chirchestoc	1¾ acres . .	1	9
,, ,, ...	½ acre . .	0	6
,, ,, ...	by estimation .	0	4
In Le Bruche	small plot . .	0	0½
In Le Heye	1 acre . .	1	0
Land of Thomas, son of Horde	1½ selions . .	0	6
,, ,, Gilbert de Halewes .	1¼ selions . .	0	5
,, (formerly) of Adam Sabym	¼ bovate . .	2	0
	about 12 acres.	11	10

The holdings in all these examples exhibit considerable diversity of size. In contrast with these, we may quote the manor of Shotwick, an extent [3] of which (date 1280) reveals great uniformity. Here were 25 bondsmen holding 23 holdings, 18 of which consisted of 1 bovate (containing in this instance three Cheshire acres), while the remaining five consisted of 2 bovates.

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 106-107. [2] *Ibid.*, 100.
[3] " Rentals and Surveys," 6/32. A translation of this extent is printed in the Appendix of R. Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*.

As instances of the possessions of some of these small men, we may make a few quotations from a list of amercements[1] (date 1303-1304) without, however, asserting that they were typical. The chattels of John Snoubal—2 cows, 1 steer, oats in sheaves to the value of 3s. Quit by the country, therefore no chattels. The goods of Reginald de Nortour—2 cows and 1 ox, worth 10s.; 1 horse, worth 2s.; one calf, worth 12d.; 1 mare, worth 3s.; 2 sows with 6 young pigs, worth 5s.; corn in the barn to the value of 9s.; 1 sick calf (since died); 1 ewe lamb, worth 6d.; sum, 30s. 6d. The goods and chattels of Yokyn, son of Griffin—1 messuage and 4 acres of land, whereof 2 are sown with corn, 1 with wheat and the other with peas; and also corn in the grange to the value in all of 2 marks. The goods and chattels of Patrick, the shoemaker of Burton, and Ralph, his son—one cow with calf, worth 4s.; one house with a curtilage, and half a selion of sown land, one selion of land not sown, and one horse worth 2s.

Concerning the standard of wellbeing enjoyed by the men of Cheshire, two widely different views may be quoted. Higden declared that Chester abounded in all kinds of food—corn, flesh, fish and especially salmon.[2] We have already seen reason to qualify this view in respect of corn.[3] On the other hand, the abbot of Vale Royal, in a letter to the abbot of Morimond (date 1336), referred to "the poor way of living in the district."[4] This view also should probably be qualified. The abbot had lived in the district at least a dozen years, but his credibility as a witness has not been established and in this instance it is probable that he wished to convey an impression of poverty. In any case, we cannot accept "the district" as synonymous with the county as a whole. Had Higden devoted to the food, drink and clothing of the Cestrians the attention he devoted to those topics among the Welsh,[5] a very useful description might have resulted. In the absence of such a description we have little reason to suppose that Cheshire differed materially from neighbouring counties. Pigs, as we have seen,[6] were numerous and good salt for curing purposes was readily obtainable.[7] Fish was plentiful,[8] poaching was common,[9] the Chester mills furnished a variety of meals and flours for making bread.[10] In the Vale Royal district, black loaves called "kybetts" as well as white loaves were used.[11] An occasional harvest feast (as at Eaton) doubtless produced some measure of conviviality.[12] Occasional dearths must have produced distress. The monks, having a well-organised system for supplies and

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 58-59.
[2] *Polychronicon*, II, 26, 76, 78, 80.
[3] *Vide supra*, 20.
[4] *V.R.L. Book*, 162.
[5] *Polychronicon*, I, 395, 401, 405, 409.
[6] *Vide supra*, 58-63.
[7] *Vide supra*, Chapter VII.
[8] See Appendix F, p. 183.
[9] *County Ct. Rolls*, 218, 223, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232. "Assize Roll," Chester, 25/4, m. 17, dorse. See also the note on the lawing of dogs, p. 43, *n.* 5.
[10] *Vide supra*, 39-41, and Appendix H, p. 191.
[11] *V.R.L. Book*, 160.
[12] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102.

greater resources to fall back on, enjoyed a measure of security against famines. They had, moreover, certain gifts of wine and venison,[1] and in some instances hunted. At Chester some of them grew soft, ceased to wear knives and belts and used more bed-clothing than was requisite.[2] For the laity, however, there can have been no softening, and if living as a whole was very rough, it was much the same elsewhere.

Finally, we may quote a few instances and incidents bearing on the status of the peasant and his attitude towards emancipation. The best evidence comes from the Vale Royal manors of Over and Darnhall where frequent disputes led to a detailed definition of customs.[3] The customs present little novelty, but since they form the fullest statement of their kind I have found among Cheshire records, they may be mentioned briefly. At Darnhall, in addition to suit of court, suit at the mill, leyrwite and redemption for his daughter's marriage, the obligations of the peasant include the duty of keeping armed watch at night round the court at Darnhall whenever, through war, watches are kept at night at Chester. He must also keep the lords' pigs and horses and be his beekeeper or parker. There are detailed provisions for the choice of the best ox as " heriot " and for the division of the goods and cattle on the death of a nativus. At Over, there is no mention of an obligation to keep watch in war-time nor are there such detailed arrangements for the disposal of the goods of a tenant on his decease. But there is specific mention of chevage, of the inability of the nativus to advance his son to holy orders without the lord's licence, of the lord's prison (by the service of keeping which one man holds his land), and of the peasant's limitations in respect of leasing or farming his land to others.

The labour services of these nativi are not mentioned in the *Ledger Book*, but examples may be quoted from other manors. The bondmen of Shotwick whose uniform holdings we have noted, owe uniform services. In addition to the 3s. rent for his bovate of land, each man owes a day's ploughing in the winter at his own expense and with all the oxen working in his own plough, another days' ploughing in Lent at the lord's expense and three days' work in the autumn.[4] At Tarvin, on the other hand, the services differ. Adam Nightingale one of many tenants, holds a messuage and eight acres of land. He does one " metben " in the autumn, has his drink or 1d., and does one " lanweben " once in the autumn.[5]

The progress of commutation may also be illustrated. At Shotwick, for example, the extent (date 1280) shows that the pasturage of the common land is already valued and indeed very largely paid for in

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 49, 54, 89, 117, 128, 147, 160.
[2] " Lichfield " MS., III, 98-100*a*.
[3] *V.R.L. Book*, 117-120, 120-122.
[4] " Rentals and Surveys," 6/33, *vide supra*, 162.
[5] " Harl." MS. 2115/230.

money. Toward a total value of 19s., the township of Saughall pays 10s., Woodbank pays 4s., Shotwick pays 1s. 6d. or gives eighteen hens, and does one day's ploughing or gives 10d., and one boon-day in the autumn or gives 18d.; while the township of Crabwall does one day's ploughing or gives 6d., and one boon-day or gives 8d.[1]

Later in our period, especially on the estates of the earldom (and duchy) of Lancaster, money rents are common, and many services have been commuted. In illustration we may quote from the account of the bailiff of Dunham [2] for the year 25-26 Edward III. The bailiff accounts for

16s. 2d., for 97 hens	sold at 2d. each.
3s. 2d. for 9½ works of harrowing . .	,, ,, 4d. ,,
7s. for 21 works of harrowing . .	,, ,, 4d. ,,
1s. 4d. of rent from John Smithson both for oats which he owes for his estover and also for works of harrowing and harvesting.	
1s. 2d. for 7 harvesting works without food	,, ,, 2d. ,,
6s. 1¾d. for 73¾ harvesting works with food	,, ,, 1d. ,,

Certain tenants have also secured freedom to grind their corn wherever they wish by making a payment in lieu of multure.

Another phase of commutation may be illustrated from the account of the reeve of Shotwick [3] for the year 31-32 Edward III. Here, as in other manors in the later part of the reign, parts of the manor were leased, and the bailiff accounts for £4 10s. received from the farm of the demesne lands of the manor together with the herbage, works of ploughing and harvesting and carriage let to the tenants of the manor for a period of 12 years, this year being the fifth.

One further example may be cited from Eaton. In the reeve's account [4] for the year 46-47 Edward III there are three items under the head "works sold":—

5½d. for works of the saddler of Bletchley sold this year;
2s. 2d. for works of John Chapman, farmer of Waterfall, sold;
2s. for works of carting hay and corn from the tenants of Eaton sold this year.

Such examples point to the growth of commutation, but, as already stated, our evidence is not sufficient to justify the formulation of

[1] "Rentals and Surveys," 6/33.
[2] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/24.
[3] Ibid., 784/11, m. 5.
[4] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101-102. There is no further indication of the nature of the works sold in the first two items, nor why the saddler of Bletchley should occur in a Cheshire account. It may, however, be added that the parson of Bletchley is mentioned in the same account in connection with the court and the seneschal.

principles by which it was effected. Manors differed widely in many respects, and it would be unsafe to proceed beyond the general principle that probably those services were first converted into money which were least required.[1]

With reference to emancipation, Earl Randle's charter had laid down for Cheshire that a lord should not lose his nativus by residence in Chester unless he remained there a year and a day.[2] I have found no claim to freedom based on this ground. There are, however, in the judicial records instances of disputed servitude and the decision, of course, usually turns on proof of descent.[3] Of emancipation by manumission there are eight instances in the Vale Royal records—all between 1329 and 1340. Four men were released apparently without payment. The other four paid 20s., 2 marks, 30s. and 40s. respectively.[4]

These are almost the only clear instances of manumission I have found in Cheshire records of our period,[5] and there is an element of irony in the fact that the one corporate body which is known to have liberated any nativi is also the most distinguished for its rigid insistence on its legal rights over bondmen. The abbot of Vale Royal must have gained a most unenviable reputation among the peasants of Cheshire, and indeed of other counties too, for in their endeavours to throw off their bonds, the nativi of Darnhall travelled far and wide.

As early as the reign of Edward I, the villeins of Darnhall had felt that the abbot's rule was unduly oppressive, and had complained to the king in person, but the abbot had triumphed.[6] A further complaint before the justice, about 1307, proved equally unsuccessful.[7] On both occasions the villeins had disputed their bond condition. Their inability to improve their status inevitably led to ill-feeling which developed into violent hatred and made several very ugly episodes in the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century. The murder of one monk, the assaulting of other monks and servants of the abbot in 1320 may have been due to some cause distinct from the resentment of the villeins—the *Ledger Book* [8] ascribes no motive—but it is clear that in 1329 disputes concerning their status led to an appeal to arms. Having concerted their plans at meetings held after nightfall, the villeins

[1] On commutation in the south of the march of Wales, see Rees, *South Wales and the March*, 173, 176, 177.

[2] *Chester Chartulary*, 102, item 13. The earl also undertook not to enrol nativi in arms (*ibid.*, item 4).

[3] *County Ct. Rolls*, XLII, 14, 73, 86, 102, 148.

[4] *V.R.L. Book*, 28-29.

[5] The only other clear instances I have found are in *Chester Chartulary*, 387, where certain villeins were emancipated by transference to the abbey. In Morris, *Chester*, 375, and *County Ct. Rolls*, 73, there are further instances of transfer of bondmen to a monastic body, but manumission is not mentioned. Earwaker cites an instance of the sale of bondmen from one layman to another (*East Cheshire*, I, 44).

[6] *V.R.L. Book*, 121.

[7] *Ibid.*, 122.

[8] *Ibid.*, 50-51.

declared that they would not grind at the lord's mill, that it was not lawful for the abbot to punish them for any offence except by the assessment of their neighbours, that it was lawful for them to let their lands to farm to any freeman for a period of three years without licence from the lord, and finally, that they were not the abbot's bondmen. Accused before the abbot in his court, they produced arms and a stormy scene ensued. On receiving a promise of pardon, some of them submitted to the abbot, but ten refused and were put into shackles till they had made their submission, the abbot meanwhile seizing their goods and driving their cattle to the abbey.[1]

In 1336 ill feeling again reached a climax, and the villeins of Darnhall showed remarkable daring and persistence. First, they went in a body to meet the justice of Chester on the high road and complained that whereas they were free men, the abbot forced them to render villein services. On their return, they were kept in fetters till they acknowledged they were villeins and made a fine. Then, under pretext that they were going on a pilgrimage to Hereford, some of them sought the king "in northern parts," but instead of gaining his aid, they were imprisoned at Nottingham for petty robberies. This, however, did not damp their ardour, for they sought the king again and presented a petition to Parliament. The king referred the matter to the justice, who after an inspection of charters bade the abbot inflict an exemplary punishment, and when a further petition was presented to the justice he merely repeated his charge to the abbot. The villeins now sought the king again (at Windsor), and laid complaints against both the justice and abbot. Edward gave them some attention, and, under protection, some thirty of them attended the court of Chester and with the help of lawyers preferred their claim against the abbot who attended in person. Again the abbot was successful. Still unbroken in spirit, some of the bondmen fled to Queen Philippa, alleged they were tenants of her son, and besought her aid. The queen thereupon sent the abbot a letter conceived in terms which compelled him to take an early opportunity of making a full explanation. He therefore produced his charters before the king and queen, and the justice of Chester also gave evidence. The abbot triumphed again, but the villeins were exasperated. They met the abbot as he was returning through Rutland and a fight ensued in which the abbot's groom was killed and the abbot's own life was only saved by the valour of his attendants. A crowd gathered to the scene of the conflict, and both abbot and bondmen were dragged before the king at Stamford. Here, for the last time, the decision against the villeins was confirmed and they were obliged to make a most abject submission.[2]

[1] *V.R.L. Book*, 31-32.

[2] *Ibid.*, 37-42. Mr. G. C. Coulton has given the extract verbatim from the *V.R.L. Book* in his *Mediæval Village* (Cambridge, 1925).

From a strictly legal point of view, the abbot was in the right. Indeed, in most of the fourteenth century disputes with the peasantry, the lords could show that the letter of the law was on their side. It would, however, be idle to identify legality with justice. It would be equally idle to assume that the monks were easy landlords, for the aggrieved peasant appeared before the abbot as a prisoner before a judge and not as a plaintiff before a defendant. Education did not eradicate the conservatism of these corporate bodies. The old order was in general maintained on monastic estates longer than on those of lay lords, and it is significant that the only trace of the Peasants' Rising known in Cheshire occurred among the tenants of the abbot of Chester.

Towards the end of July, 1381, news of the suppression of the rioters in London reached Cheshire and the king's letters denouncing the rebellion were read at Chester. The county as a whole remained peaceful, but some of the bondmen of the abbot of Chester held secret meetings in the woods of Wirral in spite of the king's proclamation, and paid sums of money for the counsel of certain men in disputes which they provoked with the abbot. In accordance with the king's letters, a proclamation was issued forbidding attendance at these meetings, and forbidding the collection of money for aid in the disputes with the abbot. In spite of this proclamation, a number of the abbot's bondmen dwelling in Little Sutton, Upton, Newton and Whitby, met at Lee by Backford, rose in arms and wrought great damage to the abbot's goods, chattels, house and church.[1] It is noteworthy that not only was the rising (so far as is known) confined to the tenants of a religious house, but also that it occurred in the part of Cheshire most remote from the contagion of the eastern counties.[2]

The rising (and indeed the earlier trouble on the Vale Royal estates also) was typical of events in other parts of England. It may be paralleled, for example, by the fierce attacks on the abbeys of Bury St. Edmunds and Peterborough, while the struggles of the bondmen at Darnhall were similar to those of the peasantry in the villages around Bury St. Edmunds in 1327.[3] Indeed, social discontent was widespread and, so far as we can see, the men of Cheshire were not more grievously burdened than the men of other counties.

[1] The "Chester Indictment Roll," 8/52, from which the above is taken is transcribed and printed in Powell and Trevelyan, *The Peasants' Rising and the Lollards*, 13.

[2] See map in Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, opposite p. 254.

[3] *Ibid.*, 161-162.

APPENDIX A.

The Bounds of the Cheshire Forests.

Evidence respecting the bounds (and therefore the area) of the Cheshire forests is somewhat unsatisfactory. The broad extent of the three areas is by no means in doubt, for references to the forests in mediæval records are very numerous, but a precise, contemporary and authentic statement of metes and bounds appears to be lacking. Since the forest rights in Cheshire belonged not to the king, but to the earl, the perambulations of the reigns of Henry III and Edward I which throw light on the bounds of forests in other parts of England, have no counterpart in Cheshire.[1]

In "Harl." MS. 2115 there are lists of vills in each of the three areas. These vills correspond closely with what may be learned from other sources, but the lists are undated; they are merely lists (*nomina villarum . . . villas infra forestam . . .*) and their purpose and origin are not apparent.

Forest of Wirral.—Ormerod's treatment runs thus: "The entire hundred was formed into a forest by Randle Meschines, third earl of Chester" (*Hist. Ches.*, II, 353).

"Harl." 2115/81 gives the names of seventy-one vills within the forest.

The "Wirral Disafforestation Roll" (1384)[2] gives a large number of names of vills which contributed to the fine for disafforestation.

So far as I can trace them, the names in each list fall within the hundred, and Ormerod's statement may be taken as correct in respect of the period covered by this work. The present area of the hundred is about 100 square miles. But allowance must be made for a considerable modification of the northern side of the Dee estuary since the fourteenth century.

Forest of Delamere.—Ormerod says cautiously: "The following are given as its original limits in an old MS. marked 2115, p. 79 'Harl.' MSS." (*Hist. Ches.*, II, 107).

This is one of the lists mentioned above, and it is noteworthy that although the three lists are on adjoining folios (79-80-81), this is the only one that Ormerod quotes. Sixty-two names of vills are given. As already stated, however, the date and origin of the list are obscure, though a reference

[1] In "The English Forest in the Thirteenth Century" (*Trans. R.H.S.*, 4th ser., Vol. IV, London, 1921), 140-159, Miss M. L. Bazeley surveys the ground broadly and provides a small map. Turner, G. J., *Select Pleas of the Forest*, introd., cii-cvii, deals with the perambulations. Cox, S. C., *The Royal Forests of England*, 131-137, covers the ground, but appears to follow Ormerod's definition of bounds for the Cheshire forests.

[2] Printed in R. Stewart-Brown, "The Disafforestation of Wirral" (*Hist. Soc. of Lancs. and Ches.*, 1907).

to the " liberty of the abbot of Vale Royal " shows that its date is subsequent to the foundation of the abbey.

In the absence of precise contemporary statements of known origin, it is possible to build up from contemporary records a fairly clear outline of the forest bounds. Twenty-six townships within Delamere forest paid a sum yearly for frithmote, and nine townships within the forest (five of which are included in the twenty-six) paid each year 17 pigs.[1] The thirty names thus obtained do not, of course, cover the whole number of townships in the forest, but they afford positive information, and when arranged in order are seen to form an almost complete ring. Starting by the Weaver, they run as follows : Winnington, Hartford, Castle Northwich, Budworth, (Oulton) Lowe, Wettenhall, Cholmondeston, Minshull, Aston (juxta Mondrem), Worleston, Poole, Wardle, Calveley, Alpraham, Tarporley, Tiverton, Utkinton, Clotton, Duddon, Kelsall, Ashton, Horton, Mouldsworth, Manley, Dunham, Hapsford, Wimbold's Trafford, Helsby, Manley.[2] We have, therefore, an area which stretches broadly from the Gowy to the Weaver and from the Mersey to within two miles of Nantwich, an unnamed tributary[3] of the Weaver forming the southern boundary, except for a short distance at Wardle where a line would need to be drawn from this tributary to the Gowy.

Further definition is possible by qualifying or eliminating certain vills. Tarvin was within the liberty of the bishop of Lichfield ; Weaverham, Over and Merton were disforested when they were granted to the abbot of Vale Royal ; while Frodsham with an adjoining area were within the liberty of the earl. Moreover, I have not found Huxley and Iddinshall mentioned as being within the bounds of the forest, though they lie east of the Gowy. With these exceptions, the Weaver, the unnamed stream in the south, the Gowy and the Mersey may probably be taken as the bounds. The area thus defined adjoined the forest of Wirral and was somewhat larger.

Forest of Macclesfield.—Ormerod makes no statement respecting the bounds, but prints in small type an extract from " Harl." 2038/8 which defines the bounds (*Hist. Cheshire*, III, 539 *n.*). This is followed by Earwaker (*East Cheshire*, II, 4-5) and much of it may be traced on the Ordnance map. The statement is, however, of unknown date and is compared with one of 17 James I.

" Harl." 2115/79 gives a list of twenty-three vills in the forest of Macclesfield, most of which may be traced in an area extending from Marple to Bosley.

Place-names in this region occur much less frequently in fourteenth century records than do those in the forests of Wirral and of Delamere, and I have not been able to collect enough to be of value in tracing the boundaries.

If the bounds indicated by Ormerod be followed, or if the region indicated by the positions of the vills mentioned in " Harl." 2115/79 be broadly estimated, the area of Macclesfield forest would be similar to that of Wirral. But in neither instance is the source of established authenticity.

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 16, 35.

[2] There are two Pooles (Alba and Baretes) and two Mouldsworths (Great and Little).

[3] The tributary rises at Ridley Green and flows by Haughton Hall, at which point it is only about a mile from the Gowy.

APPENDIX B.

Rudheath, Hoole Heath and Overmarsh.

The general plan of this work does not permit the treatment of localities, but since the sanctuaries afford a subject for separate investigation, the following summary of references may prove useful.

The three names are suggestive of the less fertile regions. Overmarsh is "a waste place" (*Cal. of Deeds, Deputy Keeper's Report*, XXVII, Appendix, 103) and in 1350-1351 a certain sum is remitted to the tenants on Rudheath "until the soil becomes better" (*Chamber. Accts*, 196).

Concerning the assumed relation between these places and the Avowries, see R. Stewart-Brown, "The Avowries of Cheshire," in *E.H.R.*, XXIX, 48, 51, 55; Cox, *Sanctuaries and Sanctuary Seekers of Mediæval England*, Appendix, 335.

Rudheath.

The bounds are defined in 1345-1346 (*V.R.L. Book*, 142-145) and may be followed fairly well on a 1 inch Ordnance map. They are ridden and there is some surveying in 1347-1348 (*Chamber. Accts.*, 125-126).

Lords lay and ecclesiatic have lands on or adjoining Rudheath and there are several disputes: *Chartulary of Dieulacres* (Wm. Salt Hist. Coll. for Staffordshire), 343; Ormerod, II, 813; *Chester Chartulary*, 402, 407; *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1349), Nos. 131, 1204; *C.P.R.* (1348-1350), 5; *Recog. Rolls*, 241, 481, 413.

Approvements and enclosure on a large scale are taking place: *Chamber. Accts.*, 86, 92; *C.P.R.* (1330-1334), 191; *Chester Chartulary*, II, 397-398, 405.

There is a mine: *Chester Chartulary*, 402, 403, 405, 407.

The Chester to Macclesfield road crosses: *Recog. Rolls*, 495; Ormerod, III, 167.

Other references: Ormerod, III, 168; *Recog. Rolls*, 95, 134, 146, 167, 168, 175, 300, 348, 410, 413, 429, 454, 461; *Chamber. Accts*, 122, 196, 240, 245, 259.

Overmarsh (called also *King's Marsh*).

The bounds are defined, but not in great detail, in *Recog. Rolls*, 271. Concerning the riding of the bounds see *Chamber. Accts.*, 122, 125.

Its relation to military activities recurs repeatedly. It is a dwelling-place for men who come to the earl's aid in time of war, *Cal. of Deeds*, Deputy Keeper's Report, XXVII, Appendix 103. It is a plot in which

the earls of Chester are accustomed to have an easement that all men from Wales or elsewhere coming to the king's peace in time of war could lodge there for a year and a day, without fixing nails, *C.Cl.R.* (1330-1333), 486-487, or as a later inquisition found, " lodge there for a year and a day without drawing bolts," *C.Cl.R.* (1339-1341), 194, and Mr. Lumby regards it as a " concession to the earl and his men when they required a temporary exemption from military service," *Chester, Birkenhead and Liverpool*, L. & C. Hist. Soc., XVIII, 54.

Some little approvement takes place, *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1349), No. 1305. Rent is stated in *Chamber. Accts.*, 223, 233, 237, 246, 254, 259. Issues and other references are found in *Recog. Rolls*, 22, 24, 117, 130, 241, 257, 271, 283, 441, 466, and in *C.P.R.* (1358-1361), 303. The bishop of Lichfield had 120 acres in Overmarsh, " T.R. Book," 279, fol. 63.

Hoole Heath.

This place is seldom mentioned in mediæval records. In Lucian's day it was haunted by thieves, *Liber Luciani*, 64. For other references see *Chester Chartulary*.

APPENDIX C.

Transport of Building Materials for Vale Royal Abbey.

Tables Ia, Ib, Ic, Id and Ie furnish complete details for three years working and are self-explanatory. They afford statistics of the number of men or horses or carts engaged at any date.

TABLE Ia.

Carriage of Stone—1st Year of Building (*V.R.L. Book*, 198-201).

Pay Day.	Number of Men.	Number of Days Worked.	Journeys per Day.	Number of Horses.	Total of Journeys.[1]	Cost per Journey in Pence.	Total Cost. £	s.	d.
30th Jan.	6	12	2	1	144	3	1	16	0
	6	12	1	1	72	3	0	18	0
20th Feb.	12	18	2	1	432	3	5	8	0
	10	18	1	1	180	3	2	5	0
20th March	16	24	2	1	648	3	9	12	0
	13	24	1	1	312	3	3	18	0
24th April	25	26	2	1	1300	$2\frac{1}{2}$	13	10	10
	20	26	1	1	520	$2\frac{1}{2}$	5	8	4
29th May	14	12	2	1	336	$2\frac{1}{2}$	3	10	0
	14	12	1	1	168	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	15	0
26th June	20	22	2	1	880	$2\frac{1}{2}$	9	3	4
	20	22	1	1	440	$2\frac{1}{2}$	4	11	8
30th July	24	24	2	1	1152	$2\frac{1}{2}$	12	0	0
	20	24	1	1	480	$2\frac{1}{2}$	5	0	0
	1	16	2	2	32	$3\frac{1}{2}$	0	9	4
	6	16	2	2	192	3	2	8	0
2nd Oct.	30	30	2	1	1800	2	15	0	0
	20	30	1	1	600	2	5	0	0
	12	30	2	2	720	3	9	0	0
	1	30	2	2	60	$3\frac{1}{2}$	0	17	6
18th Dec.	20	40	2	1	3200	2	26	13	4
	40	40	1	1					
	12	40	2	2	960	3	12	0	0
	1	40	2	2	80	$3\frac{1}{2}$	1	3	4

[1] Most of the numbers in the building accounts are given in the "long hundred." The numbers quoted above are corrected accordingly.

TABLE Ib.

CARRIAGE OF STONE—2ND YEAR OF BUILDING (*V.R.L. Book*, 201-202).

Pay Day.	Number of Men.	Number of Days Worked.	Journeys per Day.	Number of Horses.	Total of Journeys.	Cost per Journey in Pence.	Total Cost. £	s.	d.
2nd April	50	60	1	1	3000	2	25	0	0
	8	60	1	2	480	3	6	0	0
	2	60	1	2	120	$3\frac{1}{2}$	1	15	0
4th June	20	40	1	1	800	2	6	13	4
	6	40	1	2	240	3	3	0	0
	2	40	1	2	80	$3\frac{1}{2}$	1	3	4
30th July	24	40	2	1	1920	2	16	0	0
	6	40	2	2	480	3	6	0	0
	1	40	2	2	80	$3\frac{1}{2}$	1	3	4
8th Oct.	24	40	1	1	960	2	8	0	0
	6	40	1	2	240	3	3	0	0
	1	40	1	2	40	$3\frac{1}{2}$	0	11	8
23rd Dec.	3	60	2	2	360	$3\frac{1}{2}$	5	5	0
	8	60	1	2	480	3	6	0	0
	30	60	2	1	1800	2	15	0	0

TABLE Ic.

CARRIAGE OF STONE—3RD YEAR OF BUILDING (*V.R.L. Book*, 203).

Pay Day.	Number of Men.	Number of Days Worked.	Journeys per Day.	Number of Horses.	Total of Journeys.	Cost per Journey in Pence.	Total Cost. £	s.	d.
20th April	3	80	1	2	240	$3\frac{1}{2}$	3	10	0
	6	80	1	2	480	3	6	0	0
	30	80	1	1	2400	2	20	0	0
22nd Dec.	1	—	—	2	240	3	3	10	0
	12	60	2	2	1440	3	18	0	0
	40	120	1	1	4800	2	40	0	0
	1	—	—	1	60	2	0	10	0

TABLE Id.

CARRIAGE OF STONE.—SUMMARY OF THREE YEARS' WORKS.

	1st Year.	2nd Year.	3rd Year.
Number of "carting" days .	208	240	200
Total number of journeys made (all carts)	14,708	11,080	9,600
Number of journeys made by two-horse carts	2,044	2,600	2,400
Largest number of men engaged in carting stone	Nov.-Dec., 73	Feb.-Nov., 60 Nov.-Dec., 41	Nov.-Dec., 54
Price per journey—one-horse cart	Jan.-Mar., 3d. April-July, 2½d. Sept., 2d.	2d.	2d.
Price per journey—two-horse cart	3d.	3d.	3d.

Note.—3½d. per journey was paid in the first year to one carter with two horses, in the second year to two such carters, and in the third year to three such carters.

Totals.

Loads of stone.			Cost.		
1st year	14,708	. . .	£150	17	8
2nd year	11,080	. . .	104	11	8
3rd year	9,660	. . .	91	10	0
	35,448	. . .	£346	19	4

TABLE Ie.

CARRIAGE OF TIMBER—THREE YEARS (*V.R.L. Book*, 197-198).

Pay Day.	Number of Men.	Number of Days Worked.	Journeys per Day.	Number of Horses.	Total Journeys.	Cost per Journey in Pence.	Total Cost. £ s. d.
1st Year—							
28th February	6	18	1	1	108	2	0 18 0
3rd April .	6	24	1	1	144	2	1 4 0
29th May .	4	—	—	1	96	2	0 16 0
31st July .	4	—	—	—	176	2	1 9 4
29th September	2	—	—	1	60	2	0 10 0
27th November	2	—	—	—	48	2	0 8 0
2nd Year—							
30th July .	6	—	—	—	360	2[1]	3 10 0[1]
3rd Year—							
25th August .	6	—	—	—	200[2]	—	2 0 0

Total No. of journeys . . 1192.
Price per journey—1st year . 2d.
2nd year . ?
3rd year . 2·4d. average.

Table II contains a statement of the work done by 27 men who had each a one-horse cart. The number of working days in the first year was 208, but many of the carters worked for only one or two of the periods indicated. The 27 men selected are representative of those who were engaged most regularly, and there is a touch of human interest in the fact that William Lesquier, whose one-horse cart was utilised throughout the period from January to June, was able to bring two horses in November.

The table should be read thus :—

> " On 30th January, 1278, Simon, son of Alexander, received payment for 12 days' carting, on each of which days he had made two journeys at 3d. a journey," etc.

It is thus possible to determine the earnings of individual carters, and the number of days and the seasons when they were able to engage in carting. It will be seen that no carting was done during August and the greater part of September.

[1] The figure given in the building account is 70s., and is obviously wrong.
[2] No price per journey is quoted.

TABLE II.

Carriage of Stone—1st Year of Building.

Journeys made by certain Carters with one-horse Carts.

Date of Pay Day	30th Jan.	20th Feb.	20th Mar.	24th Apr.	29th May.	26th June.	30th July.	2nd Oct.	18th Dec.
No. of days for which paid	12	18	24	26	12	22	24	30	40
Payment per journey	3d.	3d.	3d.	2½d.	2½d.	2½d.	2½d.	2d.	2d.
Simon, son of Alexander	2	1	—	1	2	—	—	—	1 or 2 [1]
Richard Davy	2	2	2	—	2	—	—	—	,,
Robert, son of Davy	2	2	—	2	2	—	—	—	,,
Dyke (Richard) Dauwe	2	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	,,
John Davy	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	,,
Robert de Eton	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	1	,,
William de Eton	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	,,
Adam, son of Fille	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	,,
Hamond, son of Fille	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	2	,,
Warin le Halewes	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	2	,,
Pimme le Harpour	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	,,
Thomas le Harpour	—	—	2	2	1	—	1	2	,,
Richard Herri	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	,,
Matthew Lambard	1	—	2	2	—	—	1	2	,,
William de la Lawe	—	1	—	2	—	1	—	—	,,
William Lesquier	1	2	1	2	2	1	—	—	2 [2]
Richard Leper	—	—	1	—	1	2	—	—	1 or 2
Adam Malle	2	1	—	2	2	—	—	—	,,
Wm. de Nethirton	1	2	—	2	—	—	—	1	,,
Hamond de Sutton	—	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	,,
Robert de Sutton	—	2	2	2	1	1	—	—	,,
Adam Ubbe	1	2	—	2	2	—	—	—	,,
Richard Ubbe	2	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	,,
John Valentin	—	—	2	1	1	—	2	—	,,
Richard Valentin	—	—	2	2	1	—	—	—	,,
Robert Wolvet	—	—	2	1	2	—	2	—	,,
William Wolfron	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	,,

[1] It is not possible to determine whether individual carters made one or two journeys per day during this period. One-third of them made two journeys per day, and the remainder one journey.

[2] For this period William Lesquier used a two-horse cart.

APPENDIX D.

The Black Death.

Mortality in Cheshire.

I have not found sufficient evidence to warrant any general statements respecting the mortality in Cheshire, but certain relevant materials may be summarised.

The clearest evidence I have found in "Ministers' Accounts" is the account of the bailiff of Drakelowe, 1350-1351, where, under the head "Decay through the pestilence," [1] he gives a list of 57 tenants whose deaths have diminished his next roll. The escheator's account [2] for 1349-1350 points to a number of deaths and minorities but in the absence of a series of such accounts, it is unsafe to draw conclusions.

The "Plea Roll" for 21-22 Edward III contains the names of many widows, but this alone is not conclusive. Ecclesiastical records contain material for study and have already, in some measure, been sifted. Cardinal Gasquet states that "the benefices in the county of Chester numbered some seventy. In the four months, June, July, August and September, thirty institutions are entered in the registers of Coventry and Lichfield for the archdeaconry of Chester alone. The most numerous are in the month of September. . . . The non-beneficed clergy are, of course, not included in this number." [3]

Using the same source [4] as Cardinal Gasquet, I have compiled the following table to illustrate the presentations to benefices in the archdeaconry of Chester. The table throws light on the extent of monastic influence in the appointment of clergy as well as on the ravages of the pestilence.

Presentations by Religious Houses.

Year.	Chester, St. Werburgh's.	Chester, St. Mary's.	Vale Royal.	Combermere.	Birkenhead.	Dieulacres.	Total Presentations by Religious Houses.	Total Presentations by Laity.
1344	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	7
1345	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
1346	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
1347	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1348	2	—	1	—	—	1	4	7
1349	5	1	2	—	1	—	9	31
1350	3	—	—	—	—	—	3	8
1351	2	—	1	—	—	—	3	8
1352	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1353	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	3
1354	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1355	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1356	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3

[1] *Chamber. Accts.*, 195.
[2] *Ibid.*, 152, 153.
[3] *The Great Pestilence*, 145.
[4] Viz. "Harl." MS. 2071/155-174.

From Ormerod's tables of rectors and vicars, it is possible to draw up a table of institutions to benefices in Cheshire in 1349. This may be the source used by Morris for a brief summary in his Diocesan History,[1] but as a full list with page references is useful, I append the following:—

Ormerod.	Church.	Cause.
Vol. I, 305	Chester, St. Oswald's.	—
312	,, St. John Baptist.	Death
326	,, St. Peter's.	,,
331	,, Holy Trinity.	,,
593	Lymm.	,,
II, 57	Frodsham.	,,
116	Weaverham.	—
184	Over.	Death.
310	Tarvin.	,,
341	Barrow.	,,
370	Backford.	,,
388-9	Stoke (Wirral).	,,
438	Bebington.	—
523	Woodchurch.	Death.
696	Tilston (by Malpas).	,,
714	Harthill.	—
725	Handley.	Death.
759	Aldford.	,,
859	Pulford.	,,
III, 18	Lawton.	,,
26	Swettenham.	,,
105	Sandbach.	,,
185	Middlewich.	,,
233	Warmingham.	,,
240	Davenham.	—
469	Audlem.	Death.
554	Gawsworth.	—
594	Wilmslow.	Death.
612	Northenden.	,,
630	Cheadle.	

[1] Morris, R. H., *Chester* (Diocesan Histories), 84-85.

APPENDIX E.

A List of Cheshire Men who served in France during the Reign of Edward III.

The list is not exhaustive. Indeed it probably includes only a fraction of those who served. The letter P indicates that the men are stated to have served at the battle of Poitiers. The column on the right contains rewards granted by the Black Prince.)

(Recog. = *Recognisance Rolls.* C.C.A. = *Cheshire Chamberlains' Accounts.* Or. = *Ormerod.*)

Recog.	434	Acton, Adam de	P.	Bailiwick of sergeancy of Buckton.
,,	192	Appleton, Wm. de	P.	Office of vendor of goods of felons.
,,	192	Astelle, Robert	P.	Pardon.
Or., III	306	Audley, St. James	P.	
Recog.	19	Baguley, Thomas de	P.	
,,	42	Bollington, Wm. de		Pardon.
,,	44	Bosdon, Roger de	P.	Park keeper of Peckforton.
,,	57	Breton, Thomas de		Pardon.
,,	58	Brom, Richard		Pardon.
,,	60	Brotherton, Robert.		
,,	506	Bostock, Nicholas de		Grant to his father.
C.C.A.	272	Boudon, Robert		Reward.
C.P.R. (1358-60)	399	Bromley, William		Pardon.
Or., III	623	Bulkeley, William de.		
Recog. / *C.C.A.*	105 / 242	Cheyne, Aleyn, Kt.	P.	Annuity and (later) promotion.
Recog.	108	Chorley, William de		Custody of park of Macclesfield.
,,	121	Conway, Henry de, Kt.		Keeper of castle of Rhuddlan.
,,	132	Crowther, Richard de		Pardon.
,,	60	Coton, Henry de.		
,,	60	Crosslegh, John de.		
,,	288	Cundeclyf, Robert de.		
C.P.R. (1348-50)	566	Clegge, Adam de.		Pardon.

Recog.	136	Daniers, John.		
,, / *C.C.A.*	148 / 243	Dokeseye, Richard de		Annuity.
Recog.	292	Danyers, Thomas, Kt.		Pardon.
,,	156	Downes, Richard de.		
,,	178	Fairchild, John.		
,,	182	Fletcher, Hugh.		
,,	192	Frodsham, Thomas	P.	Pardon.
,,	192	Frodsham, Thomas	P.	Bailiwick of haywardship of Frodsham marsh.
Earwaker, I	46 / 60	Fitton, Richard.		
Recog.	194	Gandy, Richard.		
,,	206	Grimsditch	P.	Pardon.
Or., III	146	Grosvenor, Sir Robert	P.	
Recog.	215	Hampton, Richard de.		
,,	216	Handforth, Roger de	P.	Pardon.
,,	222	Harthill, Robert		Pardon.
,,	229	Helegh, John de		Various offices.
,,	240	Holford, William de	P.	House and land.
,,	244	Horton, Robert de		Pardon.
,,	288	Hammond, John.		
,,	323	Halle, John del.		
Earwaker, III	112	Holand, Robert de.		
Recog.	258	Ince, Henry de.		
,,	262	Janne William	P.	Pardon.
		Jodrell, William		*Vide supra*, p. 160, n. 1.
Recog.	288	Legh, Robert de.		
,,	60	Legh, Hugh de.		
,,	300	Littleover, John de		Land.
,,	530	Man, Philip le		Land.
,,	323 / 328	Mascy, Richard de, Kt.		
,,	328	Mascy Hamo de	P.	Pardon, etc.
,,	328	Mascy, Richard de	P.	Bailiwick of advowries of Chester.
,,	328	Massey, Robert de		Pardon.
,,	355	Mottram, Adam de		Pardon.
,,	141	Mottram, Hugh de		(See *Recog.* 141.)
,,	60	Newehull, Robert de.		
,,	360	Neville, Robert de, Kt.	P.	Annuity.
,,	216	Newton, William de	P.	Pardon.
,,	372	Overton, John de		Grant of timber.
,,	377	Paver, Hugh le		Pardon.
,,	412	Rowley, Thomas de	P.	Certain exemptions.
,,	420	Sandbach, Philip de.		
,,	433	Siddington, Hugh de	P.	Pardon.
,,	434	Simondessone, Roger	P.	

Recog.	461	Swettenham, John de .	P.	Annuity.
,,	474	Totigreve, John . .		Pardon.
,,	480	Twembrokes, Thomas de .		Pasturage in Frodsham marsh.
,,	530	Winnington, Robert de .		Pardon. See also *C.C.A.*, 236.
,,	530	Winnington, William de .		Lease of land.
,,	545	Wyng, William.		
C.P.R. (1350-54)	171	Wych, Roger del . .		Pardon.

APPENDIX F.

Fisheries.

It was natural that Cheshire with its three considerable rivers and its various extensive meres should have a good supply of fish. Domesday reveals the existence of fisheries in the Dee at Chester, Gayton, Blacon, Saughall, Aldford, Eaton and Eccleston ; in the Mersey at Stanney ; and in the Weaver at Kingsley and Frodsham. Eight fishermen are mentioned at Eaton and Farndon on the Dee, and six at Halton, Weston, Norton, and Aston on the Mersey and Weaver.

At the close of the twelfth century, Giraldus [1] testifies to the abundance of salmon, and Lucian [2] to the abundance of fish in the Dee. Higden [3] in the fourteenth century refers to the same fish and their excellence, while Leland [4] in the sixteenth century mentions many Cheshire pools containing fish and particularises the kinds : " . . . . pikes, tenches, perches and daces, the wiche . . . be the commune fish of al the pooles of Shropshire, Chester and Lancastreshire ; in sum be also trouttes."

All the Cheshire monasteries were favourably situated in respect of the supply of fish, for all of them except Combermere overlooked rivers. Birkenhead and Stanlaw stood at the edge of the Mersey's waters and Norton was less than a mile distant from the river ; the two houses in Chester and that at Poulton were near the Dee ; and Vale Royal was in the valley of the Weaver. It was natural, therefore, that the right to fish should have a prominent place among the donations to the monks.

Poulton [5] abbey stood near Eaton, where in Domesday times a thousand salmon a year were rendered.[6] The earl of Chester had given the monks a free boat in the Dee with the right to fish, by day or night, above or below the Chester bridge, at Eaton and elsewhere ; and Richard of Aldford had given them licence to make a fishery in his land at Aldford.

The abbey of St. Werburgh received from Earl Hugh Lupus not only the tithes of some of the best fisheries in the county, but also a free boat in the Dee and a ship with ten nets for fishing in Anglesey. Other benefactors gave further fishing rights in the Dee, and the king of the Isle of Man granted the right of fishing in the seas around his land.[7]

[1] *Itinerarium* (Rolls Series), VI, 139. [2] *Liber Luciani*, 46.
[3] *Polychronicon*, II, 26, 76-78. [4] *Itinerary*, IV, 1-4.
[5] The convent at Poulton was removed to Dieulacres in North Staffordshire in 1214, but retained, of course, its possessions and rights in the Dee valley. See *The Chartulary of Dieulacres Abbey*, Wm. Salt Historical Collection for Staffordshire, Vol. IX, N.S. [6] *Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, 109.
[7] The rights are set out at length in *Dugdale*, Vol. II., 384 *et seq.*; *Chester Chartulary Abbey*, 17, 20, 57, 201, 247, 383, 466, 476 ; 41, 43, 70, 91.

Combermere was less fortunate in its situation. The Dee was several miles distant, and although the Weaver flowed within two miles of the abbey, at that point it is but a small stream. The monks may, however, have had an adequate supply of fish, for, in addition to the lake Combermere itself which probably formed a very satisfactory stew (its present area exceeds 130 acres), a Welsh benefactor, Wyonus, gave the abbey the tithe of all fish caught in the Dee at Overton, and Owyn, son of Griffin de Bromfield, confirmed and increased this gift.[1]

In the Vale Royal, the Weaver is large enough to furnish a good supply of fish. The weirs at Warford and Sortfeld in the abbot's manor of Weaverham were let for a rent of 48 strikes of eels and 12 large eels annually, the lessee undertaking to sell his fish to the abbot in preference to other people.[2] In addition to this source of supply, the abbey had also a stew in Oakmere, an extensive sheet of water, some five miles distant in the forest.[3]

Concerning the three houses on the Mersey, the evidence is less clear. Norton enjoyed from its foundation a moiety " of all the fisheries which belong to Halton " and a moiety of the fishery of Thelwall.[4] The rights in the Mersey of Stanlaw and Birkenhead are obscure, but the prior of Birkenhead claimed a fishery within the bounds of his manor of Clayton.[5] Some little further light is thrown on the activities of these houses by reference to the rights of the Duke of Lancaster into whose hands the castle of Halton passed. In addition to the possession of certain fisheries the duke claimed to have all sturgeons coming within his fee. He also claimed the right to have a course in the Mersey wide enough for the passage of an eight-oared boat from Freshpool to Thelwall.[6] About 1367 the prior of Norton was charged with encroaching on the duke's fishyard (called Charneth) [7] and in 1388, he was charged with making fishyards (called Gracedieu and Charity) which obstructed the passage of the duke's boat.[8] The abbot of Whalley (Stanlaw) also had been charged with encroaching on Acton fishyard.[9]

The extension of fishing nets into the channel of a river was obviously a danger to navigation, and in the Dee, provision was made for the maintenance of a clear course. It was the duty of the Etons, holding the hereditary serjeancy of the Dee, to clear the river of all nets improperly placed there and to secure a channel wide enough for a boat twenty feet broad with oars sixteen feet long, to pass without touching the nets.[10]

We have seen, therefore, that the religious houses drew supplies of fish from the Dee, Mersey and Weaver, and that it was necessary to prevent the placing of nets in the channel of the rivers. It would probably be possible to draw up a long list of places at which there were fisheries of one kind or other, for the county abounded in suitable waters. There was

[1] *Dugdale*, V, 324. [2] *V.R.L. Book*, 26. [3] *Ibid.*, 24, 130.
[4] Beamont, *Halton and Norton*, 148-149; 152, 163.
[5] " Harl." 2101/48. [6] Ormerod, I, 703.
[7] Beamont, *Rolls of Honour of Halton*, 30.
[8] *Ibid.*, 32. [9] *Ibid.*, 30.
[10] Ormerod, II, 832, 834. In " Harl." MS. 2022/87 there is a series of transcripts relating to the " ordering of the water of the Dee." The general question of obstruction of river communication is dealt with in Flower, C. T., *Public Works in Mediæval Law*, XXVI.

Oakmere [1] (the stew of Vale Royal abbey), Budworth mere [2] with a little fishery and a boat, Peckforton mere, from which fish were once taken to stock the waters at Macclesfield; [3] there was Acton with its vivary and pool; [4] there was some kind of a fishery at Wallerscote,[5] and there were "the fisheries within the forest of Delamere" which the chief forester sometimes took over for a period.[6] In the Mersey there were fisheries at Lacheford,[7] Runcorn,[8] Thelwall,[9] Walton,[10] Tranmere,[11] and between Warburton and Rixton [12]; in the Weaver at Weaverham,[13] Acton [14] and Frodsham [15]; in the Dee at the places already mentioned, at Brewer's Hall,[16] at Shotwick,[17] and at Heswall,[18] while mill pools probably provided fish in many places. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it is sufficient to illustrate the importance of fish in mediæval diet.

In addition to nets of various kinds, devices of a more rigid order were used, and the construction of such devices (whether weirs, traps or mere wicker-work is not always clear) is frequently mentioned in connection with disputes about encroachments, in connection with repairs, and sometimes in agreements between owners of neighbouring lands. The erection of weirs, whether merely as fish traps or for the purposes of mills, naturally led to conflicts with men who had, or claimed to have, rights in the waters. The abbot of Vale Royal, for example, complained about 1284 that by erecting a mill and digging a pool, Sir Hugh Dutton had rendered the abbot's fisheries in the Weaver useless.[19]

By 1288 Sir Hugh was again the object of complaints. An inquisition found that before he had raised a certain mill and its weir on the banks of the Weaver, the king . . . "used to catch in his fisheries of Frodsham all kinds of fish, namely eels, salmon, fry and other small fish," but now "the said Hugh catches at his pleasure fish that wish to descend to the king's fisheries, and they cannot conveniently pass the said weir." [20]

It is clear, therefore, that the value of a fishery depended not only on its location but also on the proximity of other fisheries. The entries of values in the "Ministers' Accounts" naturally vary very widely. The sum of 2d. is received from the community of North Walton for licence to take salmon in the Mersey.[21] The fishery at More is worth 12d.

[1] The abbey of Vale Royal had also fisheries at Bradford, Gayton, and Darnhall. *Vale Royal Ledger Book*, 63, 64, 125. [2] *Vide infra*, 186.
[3] *Chamber. Accts.*, 254. [4] *Recog. Rolls*, 516. [5] *Ibid.*, 301.
[6] *Ibid.*, 152. [7] *Ibid.*, 421. [8] *De Lacy Compoti*, 142.
[9] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32; *De Lacy Compoti*, 143; "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3. See also a *quo warranto* in Ormerod, I, 703.
[10] *Ancient Deeds*, III, A., 5988; *De Lacy Compoti*, 143; "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3. [11] Ormerod, II, 3451.
[12] Beamont, *Arley Charters*, 33, 34. [13] *V.R.L. Book*, 26, 177.
[14] *Ibid.*, 176. [15] *Vide infra*, 186. [16] *Recog. Rolls*, 477.
[17] R. Stewart-Brown, *Manor of Shotwick*, 14, 15, 17, 18, 29.
[18] *Ancient Deeds*, VI, c. 3649, c. 4054, 4323, c. 4449, c. 4680.
[19] *V.R.L. Book*, 176.
[20] *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1219-1307), No. 1441. Another Dutton (Sir Peter) was stated in 1308 to have raised a fishery in the Weaver to the king's damage. *Cal. Inq. Misc.* (1307-1349), No. 46.
[21] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3.

a year.[1] The fishery in Budworth mere is worth 1s. in 1356-1357,[2] and 2s. are paid in 1371-1372 for having a boat on the water there.[3] At Frodsham in 8-9 Edward II, the fisheries are let at farm as follows: Blindebbe, 13s. 4d.; Curebbe, 15s.; Wilardsebbe, 12s.; and a sum of 12s. is paid "for licence to have fishing nets on the sand."[4] More valuable was the fishery of Runcorn which was worth 20s. in 1295-1296;[5] the fishery of Thelwall, worth 30s. 2d. in 1356-1357,[6] and let at £4 per annum in 1368-1374;[7] while the joint value of two fisheries at Shotwick (the Castle lake and the Floodyards) was £8 13s. 4d. in 1357-1358.[8]

[1] "Ministers' Accounts," 4/32.
[2] Ibid., 801/16, m. 3.
[3] Ibid., 4/32.
[4] Ibid., 801/12.
[5] *De Lacy Compoti*, 142.
[6] "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3.
[7] Ibid., 4/32.
[8] Ibid., 784/11, m. 5.

APPENDIX G.

Weights and Measures.

It is impossible to discuss usefully the weights and measures used in mediæval Cheshire without raising the subject of weights and measures in the marchland as a whole, and for this larger subject, so far as I know, no adequate material has yet been collected. Mr. W. H. Prior has recently dealt with the weights and measures of mediæval England,[1] but his study does not treat the borderlands as such, and although Mr. Rees has recently dealt with South Wales and the March,[2] his treatment of weights and measures is only a brief summary and confined to the southern part of the marchland. At some future date a detailed survey of the standards of the whole of the march may be made. In the meantime, it may be useful to place on record a summary of those used in Cheshire. They bear English names and some were probably local or even standard English measures, while others appear to belong to the march or to bear traces of a Welsh origin.

Standards.

That there were variations even within the small area of the county is likely. There were certainly suspicions of false measures. In 1351, for example, the citizens of Chester complained that the millers of Dee mills kept "divers measures which are not fairly or reasonably made." The Black Prince gave orders for the measures to be investigated, amended, and when correct, "marked with the mark of the prince's 'tillerie' which is in the chamberlain's keeping."[3] In the autumn of the same year, the justice and chamberlain recommended to the Prince that all kinds of weights and measures used in merchandise should be standardised throughout Cheshire. The Prince agreed, and ordered that the standards should be kept at Chester Castle.[4] The Assize of Bread furnished an opportunity for reviewing the weight of loaves[5] and Morris prints a list of fines for deficient measures.[6] *County Court Rolls* afford further examples.[7]

The Acre.

The exact area of the acre in mediæval Cheshire is still, in some degree, obscure. The subject is far too wide for discussion here, but existing views

[1] "Notes on the Weights and Measures of Mediæval England" in the *Bulletin Du Cange* (Paris, 1924-1925). Part 2, pp. 79-97. Part 3, pp. 141-170.
[2] *South Wales and the March*, 1284-1415.
[3] "T.R. Book," 279, fol. 46.
[4] Ibid., fol. 84, item, 21.
[5] Morris (*Doc.*), 456.
[6] *Ibid.* (*Doc.*), 455.
[7] *County Ct. Rolls*, 181, 208, 214.

may be summarised. In considering the broad question of the English acre, Dr. Cunningham [1] referred the reader to Mr. Palmer's work on ancient tenures in the march of Wales. Mr. Palmer and his collaborator treat the question at some length, discuss the land measures used in the adjoining regions of Wales, and argue that the Cheshire acre contained 10,240 sq. yards.[2] This figure is also given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.[3] Mr. Seebohm used the Reports of the Agricultural Commission of 1820-1823, and held that the Cheshire acre was what he called the "Powys acre." Its furrow, he stated, was 292 metres and its area 85·264 ares.[4] This is equivalent to 10,198 sq. yards, and is fairly close to the figure given by Mr. Palmer. It is almost identical with the area mentioned by a Cheshire farmer in 1883 as being used for piecework, namely 101 yards × 101 yards = 10,201 sq. yards.[5] Lord Ernle quotes no figure for the area of the acre, but says that "the pole from which the acre was raised varied from the 13½ feet of Hampshire to the 22 feet of Cheshire." [6] Professor Gray treats the Cheshire field system but does not discuss the Cheshire acre,[7] and Mr. Prior makes no reference to it.[8]

On a somewhat different plane, we may quote Mr. R. Stewart-Brown whose labours have illuminated several aspects of Cheshire's history. He apparently follows Mr. Palmer in holding that the Cheshire acre contained 10,240 sq. yards, but he goes into further details stating that "the lineal rod in this case is 8 yards as against 5½ in the statute acre, a square rod thus containing 64 sq. yards as against 30¼." [9]

If this can be proved from thirteenth or fourteenth century evidence, then the problem may be considered settled. Since, however, none of the writers quotes any mediæval authority in support of his views, it seems probable that their views are based on evidence of a later date. For my own part, I have found no mediæval evidence either to support or refute their statements. The rod and the perch are continually used ; they form the key to the problem. But their precise length I have been unable to define from any contemporary records.[10]

Linear Measure.

The terms present no novelty. Cloth and canvas as bought by the ell,[11] boards by the foot.[12] Ditching is measured by the perch or the rod [13] and fencing by the rod.[14]

[1] *English Industry* (5th edn.), 120.
[2] Palmer, A. N., and Owen, E., *A History of Ancient Tenures in North Wales and the Marches* (N.P. 2nd edn., 1910), 8, 12, 13, 17.
[3] 11th edn., Article "Acre."
[4] *Customary Acres and their Historical Importance* (1914), 107.
[5] Quoted in a footnote by Palmer and Owen, *op. cit.*, 13.
[6] *English Farming Past and Present*, 24.
[7] *English Field Systems*, 249-258.
[8] In his "Notes on the Weights and Measures of Mediæval England."
[9] "The Townfield of Liverpool, 1207-1807" (in *Hist. Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. LXVIII, 1916), 36.
[10] For a short discussion of the acre in the southern part of the March of Wales, see Rees, W., *South Wales and the March*, 217, 281.
[11] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 105, 108.
[12] E.g. "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16, m. 3.
[13] Ibid., 801/12. [14] Ibid., 4/32.

Capacity.

The measures present little novelty of name. Quarters, bushels, and pecks are used for all kinds of corn, and at the Dee mills, odd quantities are quoted in hoppers.[1] The measures may be "heaped" or "rased"[2] and occasionally wheat is measured by the "strike."[3]

Eels also are measured by the "strike."[4] Liquid measures include the "Lagena" and the "Pocellum."[5]

Salt is measured as a rule by the bushel.[6] Apparently a standard bushel was kept at Northwich and a small toll charged for use.[7]

A unit commonly used is the crannock. The term is found in the west of England and in parts of South Wales bordering the Bristol Channel where, however, it was declining from official use in the early fourteenth century.[8] In Cheshire it was used for measuring salt as late as the end of the sixteenth century.[9] Concerning its magnitude, the *New English Dictionary* states that "it varied greatly in different places and according to the commodity. For corn the crannock of 2 or 4 bushels is mentioned; for salt it appears to have been much larger." Mr. Prior defines it as $\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 quarters.[10] Mr. Rees states that in South Wales it was equivalent to 4 bushels.[11] The records of the transfer of Irish corn to the castles of North Wales in 1296 enable us to define its magnitude in another area. The cargo of one ship included: "Malt of oats: 40 crannocks each containing 16 stones, making 4 score English quarters." In another ship were "Oats: 20 crannocks each containing 16 stones and making 40 English quarters." While a third ship carrying 50 crannocks of malt of oats was said to have 100 English quarters.[12] In these instances, therefore, the crannock is a very large measure, equivalent to two quarters. That it was a large measure in Cheshire is clear, but I have found no definition of its size. It appears chiefly in the lists of tolls—as at Northwich where it was a measure for flour,[13] and at Chester for salt, coal and lime.[14]

Coal was also measured by the colbrond,[15] and in Flintshire by the quarter.[16]

Tar and grease by the gallon.[17]

[1] E.g. *vide supra*, 41.
[2] *Chamber. Accts.*, 193.
[3] E.g. *ibid.*, 194. On "heaped," "rased" and "striked" measures see Prior, *op. cit.*, 92, and on "strike," *ibid.*, 157.
[4] E.g. *V.R.L. Book*, 26.
[5] Morris (*Doc.*), 455.
[6] E.g. "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101.
[7] *Chamber. Accts.*, 144, 182.
[8] Rees, *South Wales and the March*, 129, 281-282.
[9] *Shuttleworth Accounts* (C.S.), XLVI, III, 538.
[10] "Weights and Measures of Mediæval England," 165. See also 157.
[11] Rees, *op. cit.*, 286.
[12] *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland* (1293-1301), 159. Du Cange defined the crannoca as "mensurae genus apud Hibernos."
[13] "Enrolments," Chester 2/36, m. 6d.
[14] Morris (*Doc.*), 555, 562-563.
[15] *Ibid.*, 555.
[16] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 36, 46.
[17] "Eaton" MS., Edward III/101.

Weights.

Hundredweights, stones and pounds are used.

The stone varies according to the commodity. For hemp the stone is 12 pounds ;[1] for wool it may be 12 pounds [2] or 16 pounds.[3]

Tin, copper, and *brass* by the hundredweight.[4]

Iron by the pound,[5] and by the dozen and "each dozen contains 6 pieces."[6]

Steel by the glanet, each glanet containing 30 pieces.[7]

Lime by the hundredweight, each hundredweight containing 120 "estratos" ;[8] by the ring ;[9] in Flintshire by the quarter.[10]

Lead by the carat, each carat containing 25 feet,[11] also by the pound,[12] and by the fother.[13] In Flintshire by the load and the disc.[14]

Wax by the pound.[15]

Pitch by the pound.[16]

Methods of Counting.

These, as elsewhere in England, include

(*a*) *the great hundred :*
This is used widely—for fish,[17] for sheep,[18] for pales, for rods of paling,[19] for journeys made by horses and carts.[20]

(*b*) *the score :*
This is used for smaller numbers—for piles,[21] for sheep,[22] etc.

[1] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 273. [2] E.g. "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[3] Ibid., 784/11, m. 7. On the stone, see Prior, *op. cit.*, 86.
[4] E.g. "Enrolments," Chester, 2/36.
[5] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 272. ("Spanish Iron").
[6] E.g. *V.R.L. Book*, 196. [7] E.g. *ibid.*, 196-197.
[8] *Ibid.*, 197-198. [9] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 25, 44.
[10] *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 35, 36. [11] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 127.
[12] E.g. *ibid.*, 219. [13] E.g. *ibid.*, 256, 276.
[14] E.g. *Flint. Ministers' Accts.*, 9, 27, 42. On lead weights see Prior, *op. cit.*, 91. The weights of a "carretate of lead in the Peak" and a "carretate of London" are dealt with in *V.C.H. Derbyshire*, II, 324.
[15] E.g. *V.R.L. Book*, 196. [16] E.g. *ibid.*, 196.
[17] E.g. *Chamber. Accts.*, 10. [18] E.g. "Ministers' Accounts," 801/12.
[19] E.g. *V.R.L. Book*, 199. [20] E.g. *ibid.*, 199, 200.
[21] E.g. "Ministers' Accounts," 801/16 m. 4 dorse. [22] Ibid., 801/12.

APPENDIX H.

Accounts of Dee Mills, 27-28 Edward III.

"Eaton" MS., Edward III/110.

Compotus Ricardi Mareschall clerici custodis molendinorum domini principis de Dee per locum tenentem Justiciarii auditorem et camerarium Cestrie deputati de exitibus eorundem molendinorum et piscarie pontis aque de Dee.

Frumentum.—Item respondet de lxiijs. jd. ob. de xij quart. ij buss. j estr. frumenti venditis per tempus compoti pret. cuiuslibet quart. Vs.

Et de vjli ijs. vjd. de xxx quart. ij buss. j estr. pret. cuiuslibet quart. iiijs.
Et de lxjs. ijd. ob. rec. de xiiij quart. j estr. pret. quart. iiijs. iiijd.
Et de xxxviijs. rec. de vij quart. j estr. pret. quart. Vs. iiijd.
Et de vijs. vjd. de j quart. et j buss. pret. quart. Vjs.
Et de xs. xd. rec. de j quart. et dimidis et i estr. pret. quart. di. marc.

Summa quarteriorum lxvij quart. j buss. j estr. plus
Summa denariorum xv li iijs. ijd.

Farina frumenti.—Et de xxxixs. iiijd. ob. rec. de vi quart. et di. et j hopper eiusdem farine venditis pret. cuiuslibet quart. vjs.
Et de xls. vijd. ob. et ob. plus rec. de ix quart. eiusdem farine pret. quart. iiijs. vjd. *et ob. plus in toto.*
Et de vs. rec. de j quart. eiusdem farine.
Et de xs. rec. de j quart. et di pret. quart. di. marc.

Summa quarteriorum xviij quart. et j hopper.
Summa denariorum iiij li xiiijs. xjd.

Braseum frumenti non molatum.—Et de vijs. vjd. de iij buss. eiusdem brasei venditis per idem tempus videlicet quart. ad xs.
Et de xjli iijs. rec. de xxvij quart. iij buss. j estr. eiusdem brasei pret. cuiuslibet quart. viijs.

Summa quarteriorum xxviij quart. ij buss. j estr.
Summa denariorum xjli xs. vjd.

Braseum frumenti et ordei molatum.—Et de xiijs. rec. de j quart. et di. eiusdem brasei venditis pret. quart. ixs. iiijd.
Et de xxjs. rec. de iij quart. et di. eiusdem brasei pret. cuiuslibet quart. vjs.
Et de xxxvijs. xjd. rec. de v quart. et di. i estr. et j hopper venditis pret. cuiuslibet quart. di. marc.

Summa quarteriorum x quart. ij buss. j estr. et j hopper.
Summa denariorum lxxijs. xjd.

Braseum ordei non molatum.—Et de viijs. iijd. de v buss. i estr. venditis pret. cuiuslibet quart. vjs.
Et de xxs. rec. de iij quart. pret. cuiuslibet quart. di. marc.
Summa quarteriorum iiij quart. j buss. j estr.
Summa denariorum xxviijs. iijd.

Braseum avene non molatum.—Et de lxvijs. vjd. rec. de xiij quart. et di quart. venditis videlicet quart. ad vs.
Et de iiij li xjs. de xxij quart. iij buss. venditis quart. ad. iiijs.
Et de xlj li xixs. de ix^{xx} et ix quart. venditis ad iiijs. iiijd.
Summa quarteriorum xi^{xx} et x quart. j buss.
Summa denariorum xljx li xvijs. vjd.

Braseum avene molatum.—Et de xxvjs. xd. rec. de v. quart. et iij buss. eiusdem brasei venditis per idem tempus pret. eiuslibet quart. iiijs.
Et de xxjs. id. rec. de v quart. et iij buss. eiusdem brasei pret. cuiuslibet quart. iijs. viijd.
Et de lxjs. ixd. rec. de xv quart. i buss. i estr. et i hopper eiusdem brasei venditis per idem tempus pret. quart. iiijs.
Summa quarteriorum xxvj quart. iij buss. 1 estr. et i hoper.
Summa denariorum cixs. viiid.

Mulnedust.—Et de ijs. xjd. rec. de 1 buss. 1 estr. et 1 hop. de mulnedust venditis per idem tempus videlicet quart. ad di. marc.
Et de vjs. viijd. de j quart. j buss. eiusdem mulnedust venditis videlicet quart. ad. vs. iiijd.
Summa quarteriorum l quart. et di. 1 estr. et j hoper.
Summa denariorum ixs. vijd.

Mixtilio.—Et de vijs. xid. rec. de ij quart. j buss. j estr. mixtilionis venditis per idem tempus pret. quart. xld.
Et de xjs. vjd. rec. de ij quart. iij buss. j estr. venditis quart. ad. iiijs.
Et de ijs. xjd. rec. de ij buss. j estr. mixtilionis venditis quart. ad. iiijs., viijd.
Et de ixd. rec. de iij hop. siliginis vendite.
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Farina Mixtilionis.—Et de vs. vijd. rec. de 1 quart. 1 estr. farine mixtilionis et j buss. farine pisarum venditis per idem tempus videlicet quart. ad. iiijs. et jd. rec. plus in toto.
Et de iijs. rec. de j quart. j estr. farine mixtilionis videlicet quart. ad. ijs. viijd.
Et de xiiijd. rec. de ij buss. farine mixtilionis.
Summa quarteriorum ij quart. iij buss. farine mixtilionis et j buss. farine pisarum.
Summa denariorum ixs. ixd.

Firma molendinorum.—Et de xijs. rec. de firma trium vallettorum molendinariorum existentium in dictis molendinis pro quolibet iiijs. per annum qui solebant soluere ante mortalitatem xxiiijs. per annum.

[*On the Dorse.*]

Recepta bladorum de exitibus molendinorum de Dee de anno xxviij.

Frumentum.—Idem respondet de lxxij quart. frumenti rec. de exitibus molendinorum de Dee per tempus compoti.

Summa receptorum lxxij quart. frumenti.

E. quibus computat se liberatum in vendicione lxvij quart. i buss. i estr. ad diversa pretia ut plenius patet infra . . . et sic eque.

Farina frumenti.—Et de xviij quart. et i hop. farine frumenti de eisdem exitibus per idem tempus.

Summa receptorum xviij quart. et i hop. farine frumenti.

Et computat se liberatum in rendicione xviij quart. et j hop. ad diversa pretia ut infra. Et sic eque.

[And so on, each item tallying with his sales.]

Consuetudines molendinorum de Dee usitate a tempore cuius contraria memoria hominum non existit videlicet: In primis, omnes manentes in civitate Cestrie debent molare blada sua in molendinis de Dee et dabunt domino xvi granum pro tolneto, tamen Petrus de Thornton miles et Robertus de Bradford, Abbas de Dieulencresse, Rogerus Blont civis Cestrie pro quadam carucata terre apud Marleston et moniales eiusdem civitatis clamant esse quietae in dictis molendinis de tolneto predicto et etiam hoperfre.

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